

# Pastoral Care to Street Children of Anambra State, Nigeria: A Case for Public Theology

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## ABSTRACT

Previous studies have shown that the increasing rate of street children in the world is remarkably alarming. This is an indication that the already existing Literatures which approached the phenomenon mainly on the socio-economic and political perspectives has not yielded much fruits and must be improved upon by employing a theological approach. In this research, many literatures were reviewed. Because this phenomenon of streets is a global concern, the researcher examined a global picture of the phenomenon, but then narrowed down his major concerns to Nigeria with focus on Onitsha, major commercial City in Anambra State. Anambra State is regarded as economically, politically, socially, and religiously viable as far as Nigeria is concerned; it is the commercial nerve of the Nation. Empirical evidences based on data generated from reviewed studies provide a holistic picture on the predominance of male street children among an estimated total sample size of 80, 220 street children in Nigeria as a Nation. Analysis of variance results showed that there exists a significant variation within the Town investigated (living condition, education, gender, and livelihood strategies). This study utilizes a qualitative, ethnographic approach to present a socio-theological nuances in addition to the literature on street children. The work engages a theological (public) reflection based on the experiences of poverty and dehumanization of the children on the streets of Anambra and for their reintegration into families and communities.

**KEYWORDS:** Streetism, Socio-theological, Political, Economic, Pastoral Care, Youngsters

## ABBREVIATIONS

1. M M: Mater et Magistra
2. I. C. F.: International Classification of Functioning Disability and Health
3. W. H. O.: World Health Organization
4. S. M.: Shopping Mall
5. G. E.: Gaudete et Exultate
6. A. D. L.: Activities of Daily Living
7. S. D.: Special Education
8. I. Q.: Intelligent Quotient
9. Q. A.: Quadragesimo Anno
10. U. N.S.S.: United Nations Salamanca Statement
11. N. P. E.: National Policy on Education
12. L. G.: Lumen Gentium
13. G. S.: Gaudium et Spes
14. R. M.: Redemptoris Missio
15. UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### A. Background of Study

Streetism is a socio-technical term used to describe the situation wherein young people leave their biological families and homes to make the streets their permanent abode, and in some cases, to roam around the streets

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aimlessly. Although researchers are yet to arrive at a common definition for "Street Children"<sup>1</sup>, UNICEF defined it as 'Any girl or boy... for whom the street (in the widest sense of the word, including unoccupied dwellings, wasteland, etc.) has become a habitual abode and / or source of livelihood; and who is inadequately protected, supervised, or directed by responsible adults'. <sup>2</sup>UNICEF in 1989 estimated the population of children growing up on urban streets around the world to one hundred million (100million) children. <sup>2</sup> Fourteen years later the same international agency reported: "the latest estimates put the numbers of these children as high as 100 million". <sup>3</sup> And years later still, the same agency reported same figure in its document in 2005, this is a clear indication that the

<sup>1</sup> Glasser (1994). Case Work & Working with Individuals ASSIGNMENT factors and to deal with hardships of **streetism** (Ege, Aspen, BirhanuTeferra and .... protected or supervised (Black, 1993; Glasser, 1994 in Save the children UK, ...

<http://repository.smuc.edu.et/bitstream/123456789/1263/1/Haile%20Seberato%20final%20project.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Campos, R., Raffaelli, M., Ude, W., Greco, M., Ruff, A., Rolf, J., Antunes, C. M., Halsey, N., & Greco, D. (1994). Social Networks and Daily Activities of Street Youth in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. Child Development, 65, 319-330

<sup>3</sup> UNICEF, 2002

agency has not been able to update her facts with accurate data in subsequent years since the population of the world keeps increasing geometrically. We may imagine what the population estimate would be today, quite acceptable is the fact that the increase overwhelms UNICEF after much efforts made so far by them.

In Anambra State, for instance, which is the focus area of the researcher, there is no clear official records of the census data of children living on the streets,<sup>4</sup> a fact which indicates that the Government of that state has neither made any move for such census. It is observed also that the church on her part has equally not extended her pastoral attention to these children on the streets specifically,<sup>5</sup> although, the researcher appreciates the churches interest and concern for the poor and infirm generally, what he has failed to see is a well formulated or designed programs made by the church as a pastoral entity to address the needs of the youngsters on the streets positively and to eradicate streetism. These the researcher believe, have contributed to the geometric rise of the phenomenon in Anambra state.

UNESCO, at the beginning of 2012, recorded that the world population surpassed 7 billion with people under the age of 30 accounting for more than half of this number (50.5%). According to the survey, 89.7% of people under 30 lived in emerging and developing economies, particularly in the Middle East and Africa.<sup>6</sup> The same UNESCO in UNICEF 2012 observed that there are at least 100 million street children globally, an estimated 18 million of these live in India, which has the largest numbers of street children of any country in the world.<sup>7</sup> Social Anthropologist Judith Ennew<sup>8</sup> argued convincingly that cited numbers of street children were rarely referenced to counting methods and usually had 'no validity or basis in fact'. According to the UNICEF Country program Document for Nigeria, 2014 – 2017,

Nigeria has a population of 171 million, of whom 45% are below 15 years, and its growth rate is 3.2%. As a result, the country's population could double by 2035. The country consists of 36 states, a federal capital territory and 774 local government areas (LGAs), each with significant degrees of autonomy.

Nigeria has achieved high economic growth rates in the last five years (6.5% annually), but the growth has not been equitable. An estimated 54% of the population lives below the poverty line (43% urban, 64% rural), and 90% of the poorest people live in the North. Households in the North and in the lowest income quintiles have substantially less access to services, and of the urban population, 27 per cent is food insecure, compared to 44 per cent of the rural population. Socio-cultural barriers still impede many healthy household practices. Over 17.5 million children could be categorized as orphaned and

<sup>4</sup> The researcher was unable to lay his hands on any official document of the census figure of street children in the relevant State ministries and population office.

<sup>5</sup> Observation based on facts because the researcher has been an active missionary in the area for more than 20years.

<sup>6</sup> Euromonitor International, 2012

<sup>7</sup> UNESCO, 2013

<sup>8</sup> As cited in Benitez, Sarah Thomas de. State of the World's Street Children: Research. London, UK: Consortium for Street Children, 2011.

vulnerable, of these, 2.23 million were orphaned by AIDS-related causes, and 260,000 children are living with HIV. The researcher is not sure how many percent of these children have been pushed into the streets clamoring for survival.

Anambra is one of the 36 States of the Federal Republic of Nigeria; it was first carved out from the northern half of East-Central Africa in 1976 shortly after the Nigeria Independence in 1960. It was further reduced to its present territory in 1991 when Enugu was created out of the State. Majority of the total population of about 4,177,828 people<sup>9</sup> are the Igbo tribes, while Awka is the Capital City and the seat of government, Onitsha town is the Main Market and Commercial Nerve of the State. Furthermore, Anambra State occupies an area space of about 4,844 sq. Km. with 21 Local Government Areas (LGA) all chaired by Local government chairmen. The State Governor is Chief Willie Obiano, a native of Aguleri town.

By the year 2017, Anambra State has a total GDP (PPP) of \$11.83 billion, and per capita income of \$1,615.<sup>10</sup>

## B. Statement of Problem

The researcher, working as a missionary in Anambra State of Nigeria for many years, observed that there are so many out of School young boys and girls (and children) living on the Streets of the State and no adequate attention seems to be given to them both spiritually and socio-economically. The researcher wishes, therefore, to attend to this situation by attempting the following research questions:

What are some of the factors leading to streetism in the Cities of Anambra State, Nigeria?

What is their moral and spiritual status alongside their socio-economic condition?

How can public theology make impart in their holistic reformation and reintegration into the organized society?

## C. Significance of the Study

Majority of previous researches carried out on streetism focused more on the causes of the phenomenon and based their studies on socio-economic and political implications, they failed to also consider moral and spiritual needs of the children. The fact remains therefore, that we cannot be concerned only with the bodily needs and neglect the soul of the person

which is more like unto God, both the soul and the body must be adequately attended. No doubt therefore, that this research would remind the Church in Anambra State of her mandate to turn her pastoral attention to those children wasting away on the streets. It will help the church with ideas on how to promote advocacy programs between the children, the bourgeoisie and government, which will enhance a holistic care of each child, also leading to effective collaboration between the church, the rich, the government and with other relevant agencies and stakeholders to permanently get the children out of the streets.

In other words, this study will provide a new way of exploring the problems associated with the children on the street. This is important as it could generate new findings aside from the findings already unveiled.

<sup>9</sup>National Population Commission Census, 2006.

<sup>10</sup>ibid.

Theologians and church ministers, development workers and other professionals as well as the government of Anambra State, would embrace fully the importance of pastoral care to the children on the street as one major channels to re-molding their degrading personality / behaviors and to help them out of the streets for a better living.

It will guide the Department of Religion to develop further academic curriculum geared towards assisting the church and state in dealing with matters relating to Street Children and poverty eradication in general. God lives in each of these children too, so, giving them the necessary attention is not optional but a theological mandate and a civic responsibility of everybody, especially ministers of the Gospel, if they could imitate Jesus who devoted his mission to serve others, they are equally to look up His life-examples and balance it with His words;

Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you (Mathew 28: 19 – 20a. NAB).

and,

whatsoever you do to the least of these little ones, that you do unto me" ... "what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me (Mathew 25: 40, 45-46 NAB).

Therefore, the success of our ministry as missionaries for the children on the streets in Anambra would depend largely on the success of this research work and the implementation and functionality of its recommendations.

#### D. Objectives of the study

The primary objective of this research is to examine and determine the factors leading to the phenomenon of streetism in Anambra State of Nigeria, and to ascertain the level of pastoral care given to them as part of the household of God. Specifically, the researcher aims at achieving the following objectives:

To conduct literature review on the fundamental concepts of the occurrences of street children in Nigeria with specific focus on Anambra State.

To determine what role the Church in Anambra State has played and can play to ensure a holistic living; spirit, soul and body, for these children and,

To provide the Church with practical suggestions as to how best she can foster her social doctrine among the youngsters living on the streets of Anambra State.

#### E. Scope and Limitation of The Study

Anambra State has so many Cities and Towns and very poor people are numerous in all the towns and villages, however, this study will be limited to children on the streets, few Parents, and few Clerics of the major religions (African Traditional Religion, Christian Religion, and Islamic Religion) in Onitsha North and South LGAs of the State as sample study area<sup>11</sup>; to determine their knowledge, causes, and attitude and present situation of the children living on the streets in the areas.

<sup>11</sup> Onitsha is divided into North and South LGA and populated with multiple religious groups. The researcher, also, may not achieve adequate results without including the parents, and cleric in the survey.

Onitsha is the largest densely populated City in Anambra State, founded in 1550, comprising of two large LGAs (Onitsha North and South), located on the eastern bank of the Niger River, a metropolitan city and known for its river port and as an economic hub for commerce, industry, and education. It has an area of 52 square kilometers, and metropolitan area of 1, 965 square kilometers. Onitsha, like other Igbo territories is a Christian dominated City. Furthermore, Onitsha shares a common boundary with Asaba, the Capital of Delta State. (<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Onitsha>), Onitsha has urban population of 7, 425, 000.<sup>12</sup>

#### F. Theoretical Framework

The researcher employs a **qualitative research method** with the goal of informing definition, selection, and operationalization of relevant predictor, mediator, and outcome variables. Through this process, the researcher develops a theoretical model of the transformative process that is not specific to any one tradition but is informed by common elements of the transformational process across traditions, without excluding unique contributions from specific traditions. Our thematic analysis suggests that increased compassion and altruism is a common goal of transformative traditions and that there are experiences and practices across traditions that foster increased compassion and altruism through number of potential pathways.

The theoretical framework to be used by the researcher in this study is the **See, Judge, and Act (CDA)<sup>13</sup> Model**. To express further the importance of the See, Judge, and Act model in this research survey, a simple illustration is presented:

<sup>12</sup>National Population Commission Census, 2016.

<sup>13</sup> Pope John XXIII (1961:236) M.M, (1961:236): Pope John XXIII picked up Pius XII's expression the 'signs of the times' and used the phrase to call the church to renewal in its own life and in its involvement in the world by 'reading the signs of the times' he affirms the process of See, Judge, Act as a way of reading and responding to the signs of the time: "There are three stages which should normally be followed in the reduction of social principles into practice. First, one reviews the concrete situation; secondly, one forms a judgement on it in the light of these same principles; thirdly, one decides what the circumstances can and should be done to implement these principles. These are the three stages that are usually expressed in the three terms: observe, judge act."

**Table 1: A demonstration of the See – Judge – Act Model used in the research**

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| Profile of the respondents in terms of:<br>Sex<br>Age<br>Educational attainment<br>Family background<br>Reasons for living home<br>Period already spent on the street.                       | Contextualization<br>Interviews<br>Ethnographical survey<br>Sample Questionnaire | The researcher's action is to:<br>Prepare a program for the restoration of the dignity of Children on the streets in Anambra State.<br>Create adequate pastoral activities for them, |
| On pastoral attention among others in terms of:<br>Church attendance<br>Other Religious fellowships<br>Catechism<br>Sacraments   | Treatment of the data  | Provides quality education/crafts training towards self-reliance, and,   |
| On Social attention in terms of:<br>How they feed<br>Help of Family ties<br>A special person who shares joys and sorrows<br>Relationship<br>Assistance from Government, NGOs and individuals |  | Create avenues for them to return to their families.   |

In the See – Judge – Act, the researcher presents a model to be followed during the research proper. He examines the profile of each respondent, such areas as Sex, Age, Education, Family background, Reasons for leaving home (if a Street Child) and period already spent on the street. The researcher examines the pastoral attention already in place for them, if any. Such as, attendance to Church, **other religious devotions/fellowships**, catechism and Sacraments.<sup>14</sup>

On Social attention, the researcher pays attention to how the youngsters are fed, helped to connect with family, if there is any who shares specially in their joys and sorrows, if they are into any form of relationship, if there are any forms of assistance from the government of Anambra State, the Church, NGOs, corporate organizations and individuals.

The researcher intends to achieve these observations through contextualization, interviews, ethnographic survey and sample questionnaires and data treatment, to come up with an action programs to ensure the restoration of dignity of the individual child, attract adequate holistic and pastoral attention for them, education/ and self-reliance programs, which may eventually help to reintegrate them into (their) families as respected personalities.

## G. Research Methodology

### 1. Population / Sampling Techniques

The researcher attempts a purposive random sampling selected through streets of Onitsha in Anambra State, Nigeria to be consisted of both male and female children of average age of 6 – 25 years<sup>15</sup> old living on the streets, selected parents and some clerics. This city is purposively

<sup>14</sup> Though the researcher operates within the ambit of the Catholic Christian denomination, the survey is done without prejudice to other Christian fold and Religions. They are considered in the data gathering.

<sup>15</sup> For the purpose of this research, the researcher considers street youngsters as both children between the ages of 6 and 12, and then between 12 and 25 as technically classified as **Juvenile group**. This comprises of those abandoned by the road sides or bush paths by single-mothers, those picked up and settled in the orphanage and mother-less/father-less babies' home. They are all considered due to the poor attention given to their spiritual, social, and economic needs.

selected to capture children living on the streets as sample area for the entire State. 300 children were selected randomly within Onitsha, where the street children were seen in a very large number. Also, a total of 70 parents (Male and Female) and 30 clerics of different religious backgrounds were interviewed. This gave a total of Four Hundred (400) participants in the study. These figures are hereby represented in the table below for clarity.

**Table 2 showing the sample population of the respondents in Onitsha**

| Respondents             | Population |
|-------------------------|------------|
| Children on the streets | 300        |
| Parents                 | 70         |
| Clerics                 | 30         |
| Total                   | 400        |

### 2. Instrument for data collection

The instrument for the research was interviews, field notes and sample questionnaire. The sample questionnaire consisted of thirty (30) items on a five (5) point Likert Scale of Strongly 1. Strongly disagree (SD), 2. Disagree (D), 3. Undecided (UN), 4. Agree (A), 5. Strongly Agree (SA). The respondents are required to tick (✓) the items that best described their opinion and/or situation and possible remedies. (*For details about the Likert-Scale survey, kindly see appendix Table 6*). Furthermore, the interview questions were spontaneously framed in a form of oral interrogation by the researcher applying same psychological undertone of the Likert model, and same focus with the content of the questionnaire, this is only aimed at getting more detailed informal information to support or buttress the results coming from the sample questionnaire.

### 3. Validity of the instrument

For validity, the researcher formulated a sample question items based on the research objectives/questions. This was done to ensure that the content of the questions relates to the objectives of the study. The sample questionnaire for the study was then submitted to the project supervisor for vetting after which the corrections were effected and submitted for final approval by the

thesis research committee. The instrument was eventually adopted as valid before proceeding.<sup>16</sup>

#### **4. Reliability of the instrument**

The researcher used Test-Retest method to confirm the reliability of the instrument. The sample questionnaire was administered to 3 street children, 3 parents, 2 clerics and 2 government officials that are among the sample one week before the actual administration. This 'Test-retest' method was to ensure the applicability and understandability of the questionnaire to the proposed respondents. The better the respondents understood the contents, the more positive their responses would be, this made the instrument more reliable for a better result.

#### **5. Method of data collection**

The data was eventually collected using 400 copies of questionnaire which the researcher administered himself on visit to Onitsha, in Anambra State of Nigeria, after detailed explanations of what the study entails. Also, oral interviews were made with a few individuals by the researcher and his assistants.

#### **6. Administration of the Instrument**

The researcher trained two (2) people as research assistants. And the questionnaire was later administered by both the researcher and his research assistants on both the children living on the streets, few parents and clerics randomly selected within Onitsha territory, notes were equally taken down from observations by the researcher and assistants. The researcher also made use of a voice recorder and visual camera for the oral and on-the-spot interviews conducted to enhance proper and adequate recordings of the exact responses of some oral respondents. This method was pertinent to avoid falling prey of over-generalization. Locations visited were Upper-Iweka axis, Main Market area, Okpoko, Iweka / Ochanja Market axis, Ose, Bridge-head, Owerri road, Nkpor, NgbukaObosi, D. M. G. S roundabout / Awka road.

To achieve the aims of this research, the researcher met with the following unavoidable requirements: The researcher first, obtain necessary permissions from the relevant public and community authorities (e. g. Local Council Authorities, the Paramount Leaders, the Police and other local Security Services etc.) with written letters endorsed by the relevant offices of the Saint Louis University, Baguio City,<sup>17</sup> introducing the researcher and requesting permissions to conduct the said research. This was to prevent harassments from unsuspecting public and security agents. It was important that the researcher visited some relevant government offices, this was to assess some vital information on some official data and government interventions respectively pertaining to the phenomenon under study, however, it is painful to say here that some officials declined giving relevant information to the researcher due to fear of divulging certain relevant government "secrets".<sup>18</sup>

#### **7. Method of Data Analysis**

<sup>16</sup> See Appendix for sample questionnaire

<sup>17</sup> See appendix for copies of endorsed letters.

<sup>18</sup> It is obvious that most public officials divert fund meant for the common good to their personal accounts, therefore, most officials are usually not free in conscience to release important documents to researcher for fear of exposing their secrets and falsifications.

The data collected is analyzed using both **descriptive** and **inferential statistics**. Descriptive statistics, involving frequency counts and percentages are used to present the characteristics and responses of the respondents descriptively. Also, inferential statistics, involving Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient and Multiple Regression Analysis are used to determine the relationships among the independent variables and the depending variable.

#### **8. Ethical Considerations**

In the course of this research, the following ethical considerations were maintained:

**Confidentiality:** the information collected is kept strictly confidential.

**Respect:** the respondents were accorded full respect and had the option to participate or opt out.

#### **H. Review of Related Literature**

The issue of streetism has been a major discourse in the academic and socio-political world. Especially in Africa and Asia, much has been researched and written by various researchers in a bid to resolving the alarming and ever-increasing phenomenon; what leads to the phenomenon, the reality and condition of the children on the streets and the affected families and communities.

In the process of research, there were several published materials consulted, which in one way or the other are related to the study. the following are some of the most worth-mentioning.

Kopoka, 2002, as cited in Ojelabi S. et al, Street children could be described as:

Stroll through a market or past a hotel or along the roadside of any major street in the center of most African capitals, towns, or urban areas and you cannot fail to see them. They are stopping cars and people to beg or ask for work. You will see them shining shoes, selling sundry articles of uncertain origin, or hurrying to wash windscreens of cars stopping at traffic signals. Yet others are roaming around or gathered in small groups waiting for something to do. Look at them closely; their faces show strain and sadness. Their clothes are tattered; their bodies are gaunt from ill-health and malnutrition. There is something mature beyond their years in their haunted expressions. At night, you can see them huddled along street corners, in doorways, or in any dry and secluded corner. They are the representatives of a growing multitude of children who have become known as the street children.

Ojelabi Sunday and OyewoleOluwaseun, 2013 agrees with the researcher's observation that:

The Street children are the casualties of economic growth, war, poverty, loss of traditional values, domestic violence, physical and mental abuse. Every street child has a reason for being on the street.

In affirmation, the above literature deals with the phenomenon of street children in Nigeria, although in a different region of Nigeria, its findings are like the situation observable in the researcher's area of study which is Anambra State of same Nigeria but located in a different region of Nigeria.

Ojelabi and Oyewole in their research, are concerned about the cultural factors promoting streetism among urban children in Ibadan metropolis of Nigeria. Our point of divergence from their study stems from the fact that they identified the combination of cultural factors variables such as: family structures, societal customs, and modernization, as the only more effective at predicting streetism among urban children, and that is to be taken into consideration to reduce the rate of street children in Ibadan, Nigeria. The researcher, however, do not agree with this opinion since they excluded the necessity and importance of pastoral care as major tool for solution to the problems.

Habtamu, W. A. and Arindam, L. 2016, upholds that children coming to a street may be due to push factors like coercion by family, lack of access to education, and the existence of displeasing life in Africa.

Ogunkan, D. V., and Adeboyejo A. T. 2014, opined that the situation of the street children in Nigeria is a result of general societal perception about the street children which can help reverse or perpetuate their situations. Their study revealed that urban residents' perception of street children is shrouded in negativity, and that the problem of street children persists largely as result of parents' perception of children as useful "helping hands" or as "mini adults" who are capable of supplementing family income. However, the duo researchers concentrated their studies on enlightenment of the public to change their negative perception of these children and see them as victims of institutional, parental and societal failures as the only measure to reverse the negativities attached to the phenomenon of street children.

The negative perception of people as expressed above, though unacceptable, only worsen the situation as it already makes the people distance themselves from finding adequate solution. It also encourages the public to sympathetically give them money which encourages them to stay back on the street. Our research therefore is geared towards general pastoral care and establishment of structures that would enhance the total evacuation of the children from the streets to permanent homes.

Pope Francis, in his assertion on the condition of boys and girls, when he addressed the United Nations in the following statements:

I urge international cooperation not only to solve humanity's largest problems but to save humanity itself. Quoting a speech to the U.N. by his predecessor Pope Paul VI in 1965, Francis said of the world today: "The real danger comes from man..."

He stressed that humans have a moral duty to protect the earth, saying that it is the creation of God and humans do not have the authority to abuse or destroy it. He spoke of the universal right to decent housing, clean water, jobs and education (he paused to make sure everyone heard him say for boys and girls).

The poorest are those who suffer most from such offenses, for three serious reasons: they are cast off by society, forced to live off what is discarded and suffer unjustly from the abuse of the environment. They are part of today's widespread and quietly growing 'culture of waste.' " "The common home of all men and women must continue to rise on the foundations of a right

understanding of universal fraternity and respect for the sacredness of every human life, of every man and every woman, the poor, the elderly, children, the infirm, the unborn, the unemployed, the abandoned, those considered disposable because they are only considered as part of a statistic.

In affirmation of the Holy Father's assertion above, our research work does not stop at solving these youngsters economic and social needs, but saving them from the evil of inhumanity, to restore their dignity and integrate them back to homes and families. That is the primary need of the street children, every other thing comes secondary. Pope Francis's comments relates to our topic of discussion in the sense that it concerns itself with the total redemption of the human person, not only offering them alms on the streets, but getting them out of streets and poverty by giving them decent homes, good jobs, clean water, and good education. And this advocacy can only be holistically accomplished through relevant pastoral care which can only be well initiated and implemented by missionaries and pastoral workers.

Cecillano, J. 2014, asserts that people debate more on 'who is a poor person' rather than finding solutions to poverty. And he identifies classes of the poor in the Filipino context as: farmers, fishermen, drivers, security guards, vendors, the indigenous people, the unemployed, those in slums, the physically handicapped, and those in prison, scavengers, alms-seekers, and the homeless who make the street their abode. "Everybody claim to be poor, so no one is interested in the situation of the other."

Collier, Haddon, et al, quoting Victor 2004, also points out that there are many NGOs and programs addressing these problems but there is a lack of theological basis for what they do.

### I. Definition of Terms

**Public Theology:** Public theology is a part of applied theology, which reflects critically on the ethical and political implications, here and now, of claims expressed or implied in religious faith and witness, and does so in the public sphere, in publicly accessible ways<sup>19</sup>. The Centre for theology and public Issues, University of Otago, in her journal, also puts it in a friendlier term, when it writes: "Public theology is the area of theology which focuses on issues of public concern, it is about drawing on the resources, insights and compassionate values of the Christian faith to contribute to the welfare of society"<sup>20</sup>.

**Streetism/Street Children:** Streetism refers to the excessive phenomenon of children living on the streets, although the researcher at times prefers to refer to them as "children living on the streets" in this research to avoid exclusivity and possible stigmatization.

**Socio-theological:** For this study, will be referring to the link which the lives and times of these street children have in relationship with God and their fellow human beings, as represented in the Gospels by Jesus Christ.

**Pastoral Care:** This is the Church's role of giving adequate spiritual and moral attention to the street children.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup>see Bromell, David 2011

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> See chapter 4b for more detailed definitions

**Youngsters:** is a new technical terminology used to describe vulnerable children in the international parlance of social work. It identifies children/youths who are vulnerable, Children on the streets and those with various kinds of disabilities and are helpless.

### J. Structure of the Study

This research study is organized chapter by chapter in the following order:

Chapter 1: Contains the introduction to the Thesis, with a layout of sub-headings -

background of the study, statement of problem, significance of the study, objectives of the study, the scope of the study, theoretical framework, research methodology, literature review, definition of terms, and structure of the study.

Chapter 2: Reviews the first problem question by examining the factors leading to streetism in Anambra State, Nigeria.

Chapter 3: In this chapter, the researcher examines the second question "what the moral and spiritual status of the children on the streets of Anambra State are, alongside the socio-economic situation?"

Chapter 4: Examines the third research question "How can public theology make impact in their holistic reformation and reintegration into the organized society?"; this is done by looking at the concept of Public Theology, the foundation of the study on public theology, and specific possible programs to solve the problem of streetism in Anambra State.

Finally, chapter 5 deals with the discussion of findings under the sub-headings of - Summary, Discussion of findings, conclusions, the implications of the study, recommendations, and suggestions for further studies. Then study will end with some Bibliographies and appendixes.

### 2. PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND FINDINGS ANALYSIS

#### PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

This chapter deals with the phenomenological survey of streetism in Anambra State. Attention is given to the respondents' analysis based on preliminaries and question number one of the statements of the problem. An intensive description of streetism in Anambra State will also be presented, thus the presentation will help to see at a glance the bio-data of the respondents, the general awareness of the phenomenon in the State, and the factors that contributes to the phenomenon in Anambra State.

#### SECTION A: BIO-DATA

##### 1. SEX OF RESPONDENTS

During the survey through the questionnaires, the respondents' sexes recorded and analyzed in percentage as follows: 55% of the children were males while 45% were females. This high percentage of males on the streets, the researcher gathered, is due to the prevailing get rich syndrome associated with the male youths of Anambra State. Boys in Anambra State prefer to go into apprenticeship, thuggery, all sorts of unhealthy practices or engagements to make quick money, yet history has it that this mentality has never favored the majority, so they fall back to hard drugs, meaner jobs and street hawking as alternative instead of going back to school. Females are

more in Schools because they are usually given more parental attention and care due to their very delicate nature at tender age and in preparation for marriage at ripe age. 42. 86% of parents were males while 57. 14% were females. 90% of the clergy were males while only 10% were females.<sup>22</sup>

### 2. AGE BRACKETS OF RESPONDENTS

The survey represents that 215 respondents (53. 7%) were within 6 – 20 years, 85 respondents (21. 3%) were within 20 – 29 years, 40 respondents (10%) were within 30 – 39 years; 45 respondents (11. 3%) were within 40 – 49 years while 15 respondents (3. 7%) were 50 years and above.<sup>23</sup>

### 3. RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND OF RESPONDENTS

Our survey shows that 239 respondents (59. 75%) were Christians of various denominations, 79 respondents (19. 75%) were of Islamic Religion, while 82 respondents (20. 5%) were Traditional Religion. The researcher observed that 90% of the adherents of Islamic Religion above were migrants from the Northern part of the Country Nigeria.<sup>24</sup>

Religion can redirect human thought to spiritual concerns, focusing on spiritual poverty instead of material concerns. It can provide the moral fibers needed in society. Religion can influence the response to poverty by having an ethical impact when principles benefiting all in society are applied within economic systems. Religion can also influence the response to poverty by fostering an attitude of willingness to practice generosity. Religion can educate communities for human dignity of all in society to be restored and religion can be part of the system actively encouraging and participating in alleviating poverty.<sup>25</sup>

### 4. PROFESSION OF THE RESPONDENTS

300 respondents (75%) were Street Children/Hawkers, 40 respondents (10%) were Civil/ public servants, 30 respondents (7. 5%) were Businessmen and women, while 30 respondents (7. 5%) were Clergymen.<sup>26</sup>

### 5. MARITAL STATUS

Our survey equally shows that 125 (31. 25%) of the respondents were married, 265 (66. 25%) were single, only 10 (2. 5%) were single mothers, while none of the respondents was a divorcee.<sup>27</sup>

### SECTION B: RESEARCH QUESTION 1

6. In response to research question 1, "What are some of the factors that lead to streetism in Anambra State, Nigeria?", the following information was gathered, as will be represented in the corresponding Table in the Appendices.

From the survey questionnaires, responses show that lack of basic education of some parents has the highest value of 4. 58%, followed by very poor economic situation of parents which has 4. 36, non-commitment of the State government to the welfare of her citizens 4. 04, lack of jobs and source of livelihood 4, while the failure of the church

<sup>22</sup> Refer to Appendix for the Table analysis.

<sup>23</sup> For Table, see appendix

<sup>24</sup> See Appendix

<sup>25</sup> Beyers, J., 2014, 'The effect of religion on poverty', HTS Teologiese Studies/ Theological Studies 70(1), Art. #2614, 8 pages. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/hts.v70i1.2614>

<sup>26</sup> Appendix

<sup>27</sup> See Appendix

to carry her pastoral care to meet the children on the streets has mean value of 3. 79. However, cultural / traditional Beliefs have a negative value of 2. 72. This shows that despite the many schools available in the area, education has not made serious impact in the lives of the people especially the poor due to affordability and curriculum organization. If education is the bed-rock of societal civilization, then the government and people of the State, led by the Church, should develop her educational programs toward achieving developmental and economic results. It should equally be able to model the religious consciousness of the people. We also observe, on the other hand, that traditional and cultural values have not much impact on the religious and economic situation of the street children since it was expressed by most respondents that the cultural values of the people of Anambra State is a kind that placed high value on the sacredness of the human person and drives to protect the lives of its people.<sup>28</sup>

## **7. PUBLIC PERCEPTION TOWARDS THE CHILDREN ON THE STREETS IN ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA**

On how the society see or perceive the street children, the respondents' mean value shows that, 1. 9, 3. 7% says the children should be attended to. 3. 2% gives money, food or other materials to them when they meet them. 2. 2% on avoiding them when they meet them on the streets, 1. 2% on the idea of using them as domestic slaves and laborers, and 4. 0 agrees that they should go to school, and be received or welcomed by families.<sup>29</sup>

### **RESEARCH QUESTION 2**

#### **What is the moral and spiritual status of the children living on the streets of Anambra State vis-à-vis their socio-economic conditions?**

The following results show a corresponding percentage mean value of public awareness of the spiritual, moral, and socio-economic status of the children living on the streets in Anambra State.

Results show that respondents' knowledge on the number of children who have made the streets their permanent homes was 4. 15%, awareness of any measure designed to stop the increase and stay of these children on the streets by the government of the state has a negative value of 2. 55%. That the Church in the state spend major part of her money and time to attend and provide for these youngsters had 2. 77% mean value and this proves negative awareness by the public. that the church in the state collaborates with the government to attend to the situation has 4. 10%, 3. 28% was for awareness of provision of affordable basic education as a measure put in place to solve the problem, 3. 3% for free education by the state government, 3. 1% for special training and Catechism centers around the streets by the Churches to draw them nearer to God. Arresting and harassing the children with Police by the Government of the State has a negative mean value of 2. 96%, Sending food and clothes to the street children always on the streets by Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), 3. 28% Establishment of youths and children development centers in the various urban centers 3. 28%. There is mean value of 4. 53% for turning pastoral attention to the street children as an important and

beneficial kind of New Evangelization mission of the Church in Anambra State.

4. 74% agrees that pastoral care will redirect the child's life to positive future. Where possible re-uniting them with (their) families. 4. 32% says it prevents abandoned children from seeing the streets as their only hope and source of survival. 4. 57% says it reduces the risk of exposure from all recognized and unrecognized sources of infection. 3. 83% says that pastoral care will create opportunity for the Church to attract the attention of the government to the plight of the street children and at the same time provide spiritual attention for them. And 4. 53% agrees that through pastoral care to the children on the streets, the Church will save more lives, win more souls to God, and help create a better and crime-free Society.<sup>30</sup>

### **RESEARCH QUESTION 3**

Research question 3 discourses "**How can Public theology make impact in their holistic reformation and reintegration into the organized society?**" and the following results was collated:

Among the measures to be used by the church to improve the well-being of the street children in Anambra State are: Partnership programs for poverty alleviation by the church, government, and NGOs which has the mean value of 4. 53%, positive attitude of government officials, parents, extended families, NGOs, Christians towards the street children 4. 49%, adequate provision of free alternative education such as crafts training - sewing, ICT, cobbling, cosmetology etc., for self-reliance has 4. 26%. While creation of Basic Christian Communities

within busy centers has mean value of 3. 66%, regular celebration of open-air masses in those centers has 3. 61%, and priests giving quality time for consultations and counselling with the affected victims has the mean value of 4. 2. The appointment of special priests and religious personnel by the Bishops in the State, into this ministry to work with existing NGOs has the mean value of 4. 0, training of vanguards to work with the church personnel has 3. 61, forming peer co-operative and progressive development among the street children where they can be mentored has 3. 89.<sup>31</sup>

These responses point to the fact that the people believe so much that the Church can do a great deal to alleviate the situation of streetism if only she could turn her maternal gaze towards the streets away from the church compound. The Magisterium and the leaders of the various religious institution could collaborate with the government to ensure a holistic view and attention toward the entire human race in Anambra State without prejudice to institutional biases and constitutions. Our Theology can only have meaning if it brings God closer to the public at the periphery.

### **FOUR (4) SAMPLE ORAL INTERVIEWS /SUMMARY RESPONSES OF RESPONDENTS:**

The researcher also conducted few oral interviews with some personalities of which four sample responses have been summarized. Sample questions for the interviews could be found in the appendices too.

<sup>28</sup> See Appendix

<sup>29</sup> See Appendix for illustrating Table.

<sup>30</sup> See Appendix, Table 10.

<sup>31</sup> See Appendix, Table 11.

It is real and very pathetic that there are many street children in Anambra State, especially in the City of Onitsha. The causes are many and diverse, like single parenthood and orphans who could not be cared for, or even some have no homes to go to. Some left their villages to the Cities hoping to find better life which is not available, thereby ending up in the streets; sometimes, it is because of indiscipline or drug abuse (Juvenile delinquency); spiritual manipulations also contributed. The government has not done much in this regard to look into the phenomenon and the church has not done much either as they have not taken positive action to address the issue. Our pastors are only interested in their own gains, they do not represent the complete attitude and acts of Jesus who came that 'they may have life in abundance'. The Church should assign ministers to go to the Streets and attend to this people with food, clothes, counselling for hope, prayers and trainings.

From the responses, we observed that all the respondents agreed unanimously that there exists the phenomenon of street children; the awareness is very positive and pathetic.

The respondents equally attributed the causes to poor educational system, very expensive school fees and educational materials, certain inhumane cultural interpretations, single parenthood and early death of parents, very poor per capita incomes etc. and all these stems from the very bad or poor economic situation of the State and the Nation in general.

The respondents upheld that the State government had done nothing reasonable to arrest the situation, but one respondent appreciated the State government's recent effort to improve the educational system in the State, which had no continuity due to political instability.

Finally, they queried the Church, and other religion leaders in the State for not paying any pastoral or social attention to the youngsters on the streets in the State knowing that they are important part of the family of God on mission unfortunately segmented. They therefore recommend that religious leaders in the area should rethink and redirect some of her pastoral attention to the streets in Anambra State, to draw out some quality pastoral activities such as community schools for the poor children on the streets, social activities to get them together, counselling programs, crusades, masses etc., and to collaborate with the State Government on this matter. They opined that the Church leaders like the Bishops, and senior pastors, should try and assign some priests and pastoral workers to work among the street children for better results.<sup>32</sup>

### **3. STREET CHILDREN AND THE NEED FOR PASTORAL CARE**

#### **A. NEED FOR PASTORAL CARE OF THE BODY**

Very often, we are tempted to limit our understanding of pastoral care to simply attending to the spiritual needs of the human person, needs which may for some, include praying, reading the scriptures, going to church, receiving all the sacraments, so as not to lose our relationship with God. Hence, the church in the past, especially the Pentecostal-evangelical born- again Christians who

generally believes that there is no need to look after the body. The pre-Vatican II penny catechism was equally guilty of this teaching where it asked: "Of which must you take more care, the body or the Soul?" and its response "The Soul, because our soul is like unto God, only by taking care of the soul man attains everlasting life." This sensitive but unrefined comparison had made some early Christians chastised their bodies with excruciating pain and punishment in the name of subjection of the flesh to the soul or spirit. The Monasteries of St. Benedict, Pachomius, Anthony of Egypt and others were guilty of that kind of catechetical teachings which thrived until the dawn of the Second Vatican Council.

In the Semitic line of religions, the Judaic-Christian-Islamic one, the traveler on the spiritual journey is described in terms of a "human spirit" or "soul", inherently different to the world of its body. "Wisdom" in these traditions frequently involves choosing the world of the "spirit" as opposed to the world of "matter" and striving to arrive at a situation where the "spirit" prevails. In traditional Christian theology, human nature is described in terms of the well-known biblical image of a "half-angel" self, struggling to overcome a "half-animal" self. Historically, this Christian self-portrait intermingled with the Ancient Greek belief of the soul being immortal and fundamentally different to our perishable bodies.

Both in terms of theology and philosophy, the distinction between an eternal "soul" and a transient "body" has dominated Western thought and is usually referred to as "dualism". In theology, the 5th century priest, St. Augustine of Hippo is usually cited to be the most famous exponent of dualism, while in philosophy, apart from Plato and Socrates, reference is usually made to the 17th century pioneer of modern science, the French mathematician, René Descartes. Despite all these theories and beliefs, we must realize that the Good News is centered around cosmological justice and the maintenance of universal moral balance.<sup>33</sup>

Such poor theological notion has also affected the attitude of many Christians, that we no longer see the need to concern our Christian acts and mission to the needs of the poor, especially those on the Streets whom we consider as apart from the household. The Gospel is a "Good News" which 'was' and 'is' preached only for one reason, to turn the attention of the "haves" towards the "have nots",<sup>34</sup> the "righteous" (Otherwise referred to as the Abled) to the "unrighteous",<sup>35</sup> the "Dives" to the "Lazarus".<sup>36</sup> A Gospel to turn from Marginalization to inclusivity,<sup>37</sup> and

<sup>33</sup>See Anjam Khursheed (2018) *Body, Mind, Soul and Spirit*. PP. 119 -110. in **Journal of psychology and theology** 10(2):105-112. NAB

<sup>34</sup> See Luke 4: 18 -19, 21. NAB

<sup>35</sup> See Mat. 6: 1 – 4. NAB. The continuation of the Homily of Jesus (Sermon on the Mount), warning against doing good in order to be seen. And here, he refers to the righteous Scribes and Pharisees as hypocrites, a designation which reflects attitude resulting not only from the controversies at the time of Jesus' ministry but from the opposition between Pharisaic Judaism and the Church of Matthew. *They have received their reward: they desire praise and have received what they were looking for.*

<sup>36</sup> Lk. 16: 19-31. NAB

<sup>37</sup> The Samaritan women (See Lk. 4:4-42 NAB), were regarded by the Jews as ritually impure, and therefore Jews were forbidden to drink from any vessel they had handled. V. 27 reacts to Jesus

<sup>32</sup> See Appendix for the detailed questions and answers from the various respondents. Tables 12 -

repentance from our selfish and wicked ways to hospitality, sharing and love.<sup>38</sup> The Gospel of going to finding and feeding the lost and straying Sheep (Mat. 18: 10-14; Jn. 21: 15-17 NAB).

## B. STREETISM: A KIND OF DISABILITY

In social and Psychological readings, Streetism is viewed as a kind of disability. Disability is an impairment, a problem in the body and mental function; an activity, mental or psyche limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action; it involves a participation restriction which is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situation. Therefore, streetism is a complex phenomenon, reflecting an interaction between the experiences of the individual and features of the society in which the child lives. The child living on the street is disabled because he or she is generally unable to attempt and provide for himself or herself the daily necessities of life, he or she is unable to enjoy the comfort of a good home and loving relationship of parents and family members. Most children and youths living on the streets, for instance, are found with developmental disabilities, and some with mental or "intellectual" disorders or retardation, also known as *Psychiatric or psychosocial disability (Psychology class notes)*. Many are already infested with various kinds of chronic diseases that also qualifies them as disabled (*Field observation*).

In a broader sense, disability does not only imply physical deformities but involves inabilities in our social, economic, political and psychosocial and religious state in life.

The ICF<sup>39</sup> produced by the World Health Organization, distinguishes between body functions (Physiological or psychological). It defined impairment in bodily structure or function as involving an anomaly, defect, loss or other significant deviation from certain generally accepted population standards, which may fluctuate over time. Activity is defined as the execution of a task or action. The ICF lists nine (9) broad domains of functioning which can be affected: **Learning and applying knowledge, General tasks and demands, Communication, Basic physical mobility, Domestic life, and Self-care (i. e., activities of daily living). Interpersonal interactions and relationships, Community, Social and Civic life, including employment.**<sup>40</sup>

Various models have expressed their opinions on the issue of disabilities of various kinds, for the purpose of this research we chose the following models.

**1. The Moral Model:** refers to the attitude that people are *morally responsible* for their own disabilities. For example,

"talking with a woman", a religious and social restriction that Jesus is pictured treating as unimportant.

<sup>38</sup> In Lk 19: 1-10, (NAB) the story of the Tax collector Zacchaeus is unique. As a rich man, he provides a contrast to the rich man in Lk 18:18-23 who cannot detach himself from his material possessions to become a follower of Jesus. Zaccaeus, according to Luke, exemplifies the proper attitude toward wealth: he promises to give half of his possessions to the poor, and consequently he is a recipient of salvation.

<sup>39</sup> International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health. <http://www.who.int/classifications/icf/icfmore/en/>

<sup>40</sup> World Health Organization (2004) in Azebeokhai, Ben (2011). *Physical Disabilities: Caused or a Curse?* St. Stephen Press Inc. Onitsha. Pp. 12.

disability may be because of bad actions of parents if congenital, or as a result of practicing witchcraft if not. This attitude may also be viewed as a *religious fundamentalist* offshoot of the original animal roots of human beings when humans killed any baby that could not survive on its own in the wild. Echoes of this can be seen in the doctrine of Karma in Indian religion.<sup>41</sup>

In matters regarding faith, the children on the streets could be described as disabled when as members of the Body of Christ they are separated physically and spiritually from the Church. They have no access to the church's pastoral care and the faith teaching of the Church which nourishes and empowers the human soul. The Church on her part is disabled because the children on the streets are supposed to be part of the body of Christ (The branches) nourished by Christ who is the Vine. When part of this church suffers and in pain, and unable to partake in the full communion with the Church and in Christ, then she is disabled. She is disabled by not being able to carry the gospel message of emancipation and redemption to the "Lost Sheep" on the streets. The Church suffers from disability when she is not able to carry her realistic corporal and spiritual works of mercy to meet the children on the streets.

**2. The Tragedy / Charity Model:** depicts disabled and helpless people as victims of circumstances who are deserving of pity. These, along with the medical model, are the models most used by non-disabled people to define and explain disabilities.

**3. The Social adapted Model:** states that although a person's disability poses limitations in an able-bodied society, oftentimes, the surrounding society and environment are more limiting than the disability itself.

**4. The Economic Model:** The Economic Model defines disability by a person's inability to participate in work. It also assesses the degree to which impairment affects an individual's productivity and the economic consequences for the individual, employer and the State. Such consequences include loss of earnings for and payment for assistance by the individual; lower profit margin for the employer; and State welfare payments. This model is directly related to the charity/tragedy model. Many children are on the streets due to the parents' involvements in some fetish beliefs and practices believing in witchcrafts and reincarnation of a dead perceived evil member of the family, congenital through bad actions of parent/s such cases as unwanted pregnancies. They can be victims of circumstances which falls under the Tragedy/Charity model, thy may fall under the social

<sup>41</sup>**Karma**, Sanskrit *karman* ("act"), Pali *kamma*, in Indian religion and philosophy, the universal causal law by which good or bad actions determine the future modes of an individual's existence. Karma represents the ethical dimension of the process of rebirth (*samsara*), belief in which is generally shared among the religious traditions of India. Indian soteriologies (theories of salvation) posit that future births and life situations will be conditioned by actions performed during one's present life—which itself has been conditioned by the accumulated effects of actions performed in previous lives. The doctrine of karma thus directs adherents of Indian religions toward their common goal: release (*moksha*) from the cycle of birth and death. Karma thus serves two main functions within Indian moral philosophy: it provides the major motivation to live a moral life, and it serves as the primary explanation of the existence of evil.

adapted model were in they face unbearable circumstance on the open streets environment. Furthermore, they share in the Economic model since they are neither able to provide for themselves economically nor be part of the economic development programs of the State. For them, there is loss of earnings for and payment for assistance by the individual.

It is therefore abundantly clear, from the study, that those children on the streets share in all the implications and disability effects described by the above models.

### C. RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CHURCH

If the government of Anambra State have failed in her responsibilities to provide adequate attention for all citizens of the State, especially the street children and migrated youths, it becomes the responsibility of the Church and practicing Christians in general to employ and explore all her available means and resources to attend to the suffering brothers and sisters and also explore various means of getting the government involved.

Recently, the Church in Anambra State succeeded in getting the state government to return all the confiscated mission schools back to the owners for proper management and affordability. The government of Mr. Peter Obi (Governor 2006 – 2012) broke a world record of being the only governor in Nigeria to return all schools to the respective mission owners, renovated all, provided state of the art facilities, provided financial grants for continuity, and courageously ventured into signing a continuous collaboration bills to pay the teachers' salaries, while the mission does the management. A wonderful move, but what then is the problem in these Schools today? Instead of the missions to reduce to at least 5% the fees of the schools to give opportunities for the children on the streets and other poor people to come in, they still keep the fees so high. What then is the point of the Church going into school apostolate if not as a mission to win souls and polish them for the kingdom? I see the Church in Anambra State missing her track of evangelizing for the "Kingdom" and falling into the trap of entrepreneurship. I fear for the Church in Anambra what Jesus feared for the Temple in Jerusalem<sup>42</sup>. The Church in Anambra is so popular for her daily and weekly money collections, from the government and from the parishioners. Launching of one kind to the other, everyone wants to build the "magnificent Temple of Solomon" in their areas, so priests demolish dedicated Church structures to give way to a higher one. Despite the economic situation in the Country, people are made to cough out the little they have only to destroy and rebuild, and to purchase luxury jeeps and cars. There are now visible competitions between the politicians and the church leaders on the use of vehicles. During Cathedraticum, the priests engage themselves in unholy competitions on who will make the highest gifts of Cows and Cash to the Bishop of the Diocese, what reason? To win the Bishop's favours? May be! Is the Bishop Aware of what they do to raise such huge amount they submit? I do not know. But it is not true to say that the priests employ some evangelical tricks to extort these monies to

<sup>42</sup> When Jesus feared that the Temple of Jerusalem has become a popular "SM" instead of a Centre for evangelism and prayer, he reacted and got the people displaced. "It is written, 'My house shall be a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves.'" (Lk. 19: 45 – 46, NAB).

submit to Bishops, to build most expensive Churches and Rectories and cars, etc. ? When a priest tells a poor person to give all he or she has to God as a "widow's mite" and go hungry for the sake of the Kingdom, and the innocent pious, poor fellow ignorantly obeys and gives all in the name of giving tithes, or gift offering or sacrificial donation, only to be used for irrelevant ventures, personal, parish or Diocesan, is that not an evangelical trick? Using the gospel to extort instead of giving hope and life to the people who run to God for shelter in the Church, we end up turning them into money-making robots. The Jerusalem Temple scenario should open our eyes to this misguided activity of the Church.

The Church must be a Church of the poor<sup>43</sup>, it was the poor that came together in the first place at Jerusalem to form a Christian Church, they lived poor, acted poor and for the poor they gave their lives in imitation of their leader, Jesus. This also is expected to be the responsibility of the Church in Anambra State. The poor must not be left out like orphans.

The Church is Mother and must never forget the tragedy of her children. She too must be poor, to become fruitful and to respond to so much suffering. A poor Church is a Church that practices a voluntary simplicity in her own life -- in her institutions, in the lifestyle of her members -- to break down walls of separation, especially those that separate us from the poor. This takes prayer and action. Let us pray intensively to the Lord to awaken us, to make our Christian families agents in this revolution of family closeness that is now so necessary. This is what the Church has been made of since the very beginning. And let us not forget that the judgment of the needy, the small and the poor prefigures the judgment of God.<sup>44</sup>

The Church in her teaching through the Magisterium, with due reference to the Catholic Church has never seized to teach and direct the Universal Church to her primary responsibility. Her activity is practical, activity-based, evangelical and mission oriented. Evangelism and mission must be action-oriented, and that is the only way we can be missionaries, the only way we can be "Christians" and the only way we can achieve our pastoral mandate for the "Common Good"; "*The Good News*". In the recent highly priced Apostolic exultation *Gaudete et Exultate* of Pope Francis, he encouraged the Church and all Christians to diversify their attention to accommodate the poor and the marginalized as a major aspect of the Churches responsibility, in his own words:

Our defense of the innocent unborn, for example, needs to be clear, firm and passionate, for at stake is the dignity of a human life, which is always sacred and demands love for each person, regardless of his or her stage of development.

<sup>43</sup>"How I would like a church that is poor and for the poor," Pope Francis to about 5,000 journalists gathered for an audience with the Pope, after his election as the Pope. (Joshua J. McElwee, 2013). The Francis Chronicles. National Catholic Reporter. <https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/francis-chronicles/pope-francis-i-would-love-church-poor>.

<sup>44</sup>Francis (2015). Pope Francis addresses the United Nations General Assembly on September 25. <http://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2015/09/25/443447007/tough-words-from-pope-francis-8-great-quotes-from-his-u-n-speech>

**Equally sacred, however, are the lives of the poor, those already born, the destitute, the abandoned and the underprivileged, the vulnerable infirm and elderly exposed to covert euthanasia, the victims of human trafficking, new forms of slavery, and every form of rejection.**<sup>45</sup>

Here, the researcher does not intend to judge those Church officials in their misdirected responsibilities towards the children on the streets and the poverty-stricken in general, however, this research is aimed at making a humble but convincing appeal to the Church, to revisit her pastoral program to have more bearing on the lives of those who are neglected on the peripheries, such as those on the streets for any reason. We do not therefore claim to be sole authority in this knowledge, so that we may not appear to be like those Pope Francis identified as the modern "Gnosticism".<sup>46</sup>

#### D. AREAS OF PASTORAL RELEVANCE

The Church's areas of pastoral relevance are numerous, ranging from spiritual, social, economic, political and cultural aspects of human living. This research, however, is not meant to discuss all these aspects, because in all fairness to the Church, some areas are being effectively attended to in Anambra State. Our focal point, therefore, will be to address the three prime necessities of life which affects the children living on the streets and must not be undermined for the pastoral action of the Church to be holistic. These areas to which the researcher deems it necessary to re-direct the attention of the pastoral workers is discussed in the following five paragraphs.

The main purpose of Jesus's mission here on earth is to bring peace to humanity, human race which have been grossly affected by violence and injustice, this was the alamode which characterized the entire Jewish Kingdom in those times. Relative peace eluded the people of God whom the Babylonians and the Romans rubbed of their peaceful coexistence, warred against, conquered, took captive and dominated for hundreds of years. Jesus' thirty years on earth and his three years preaching and teaching by example is a clear indication of the intention of God's creation, "I have come that they may have life and have it in abundance"

(Jn. 10: 10 NAB). The peace, harmony, fulfillment and coexistence of the people of God was paramount in the pastoral mission of Jesus, so the Good News was to bring back the lost Sheep of Israel for which he became the Good Shepherd (cf. Mt. 10: 6; 15: 24; 18: 10 – 14 and Mt. 9: 35 - 38 NAB). His mission was not to form a Church apart from the existing covenanted people, his mission was to heal wounds, to set the downtrodden free, to attend to the abandoned, release to the captives, to correct the

<sup>45</sup> ----- G.E.

<sup>46</sup>"Gnostics think that their explanations can make the entirety of the faith and the Gospel perfectly comprehensible," he writes. "They absolutize their own theories and force others to submit to their way of thinking." He condemns those who seek to judge those whose lives appear to be at odds with church teaching, writing: "God is mysteriously present in the life of every person, in a way that he himself chooses, and we cannot exclude this by our presumed certainties. Even when someone's life appears completely wrecked, even when we see it devastated by vices or addictions, God is present there." (See Francis 2018, GE. 36 - 39)

intimidating and marginalizing interpretation of the Scriptures and Commandments of God. To convert the hearts that use other humans as footstool to reach their selfish goals. The Chief Priests, the Scribes, and the pharisees who claim to master the law and lay it as burden on others by their adjudications.

Therefore, the Church in Anambra State, must embark on passionate advocacy for the rights and dignity of the children on the street because they are among the abandoned children of God that Jesus felt for (v. 36). They are children who earnestly desire the blessing of Jesus.

Then children were brought to him that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples rebuked them, but Jesus said, "Let the children come to me, and do not prevent them; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." After he placed his hands on them ... (Mt. 19: 13 – 15. NAB).

Peace is often defined as when human rights of a person are fulfilled or met. The English Oxford Dictionary of current English (Third edition) sees peace as "freedom from noise or anxiety, freedom from or the ending of war." It goes to show the important place that human rights occupy in our work for justice and peace. There cannot be justice and peace without the fulfillment of the fundamental human rights.

What then is human rights? Human rights can be defined as those rights or privileges that every human being possess and is entitled to enjoy simply by the virtue of being human.<sup>47</sup> At the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights, government reaffirmed in Vienna Declaration that "human rights are the birthright of all human beings." Human rights are based on the fundamental principle that all persons have an inherent human dignity and that regardless of sex, race, colour, Language, origin, age, class, condition or beliefs, we are equally entitled to our rights.<sup>48</sup> Justice is said to be a situation where people get what is due to them. There cannot be peace if there is no justice, justice is not present when people are treated in a way that is contrary to their dignity.

Therefore, in Anambra situation, when unfortunate children are left to spend their lives on the wild streets and waste away as if they are "nobodies", because they have no voice in the polity and no one to speak for them, that becomes an abuse of their human rights, they are actually being denied of their rights, most of the road hawkers are under child labour in the disguise of making efforts to make ends meet. It is on this grounds that the researcher is calling on the church for intervention like Jesus did during his time on earth as man and leader.

In the CRA of July 31, 2003, part 1, the following were enacted for the care of the Nigerian Child:

1. Best interest of the child to be paramount consideration in all actions.
2. A child to be given protection and care necessary for his well-being.

The Child's right act includes the following:

- A. Right to survival and development

<sup>47</sup> My definition

<sup>48</sup>World conference of human rights. Vienna, 1993. On 25 June 1993, representatives of 171 States adopted by consensus the Vienna Declaration. <http://at20.ohchr.org/conference.html>

- B. Right to name
- C. Freedom of association and peaceful assembly
- D. Freedom of thought conscience and religion
- E. Right to private and family life
- F. Right to freedom of movement
- G. Right to freedom from discrimination
- H. Right to dignity of the child
- I. Right to leisure, recreation and cultural activities
- J. Right to health services
- K. Right to parental care, protection and maintenance
- L. Right of a child to free compulsory and universal primary education
- M. Right of a child in need of special protection measure
- N. Right of unborn child to protection against harm.<sup>49</sup>

Other Federal and State Acts of Nigeria very relevant to this research and which are far from being implemented, and needs the immediate reaction of Church, Public Theologians and Pastoral workers in Anambra State, are:

- O. Parents are to provide guidance with respect to child's responsibilities
- P. Prohibition of child's marriage
- Q. Prohibition of child's betrothals
- R. Tattoos and skin marks
- S. Exposure to use, production and trafficking of narcotic drugs
- T. Use of children for criminal activities
- U. Abduction, removal and transfer from lawful custody
- V. Prohibition of exploitative labour
- W. Prohibition of buying, selling, hiring or otherwise dealing in children for hawking, begging from alms or prostitution.
- X. Unlawful sexual abuse and exploitation
- Y. Prohibition of recruitment of children into the armed forces.

Children of Adam and Eve! It is not about the enactment of laws; these laws are extension of God's laws for the good of humanity. They have been given and signed into law, but I challenge one to go to Anambra State to confirm these constitutional laws have been rubbished even by the Legislators themselves, promulgators and the enforcement agents. Fear to say some Church officials and parents too are culprits in this. Also, the unlawful practice of cronyism<sup>50</sup> in Anambra State and Nigeria in General, which fast becoming a customary practice has contributed immensely to this ugly phenomenon and nothing is being done about it, the system is drastically deteriorating and the poorest of the poor and children on the streets are the most affected. The Church urgently need to stand up to her pastoral duty; she is the catalyst for human rights, social justice and social change.

**1. EDUCATION:** One of the pastoral functions of the Church is to educate the people in a manner that they will be liberated from the burden of ignorance. Education, social or religious, is a sure way the Church evangelizes the world, and education can be done in various ways. In Anambra State today, the Church is noticeably involved, if not at the forefront, in the education ministry, even though she does that as a form of industry instead of as a ministry.

<sup>49</sup> National Assembly (2003) CRA, *Federal Republic of Nigeria*. Every human being is entitled to enjoy human rights and to have them protected by the laws and practices of the country.

<sup>50</sup> Improper appointments of friends and associates to positions of authority.

The Church should prominently engage herself the ministry of "Special Education" (SD) as part of her numerous pastoral care.

A special School is a school catering for pupils or students who have special educational needs due to sever learning difficulties, physical disabilities, behavioral problems, or inability to meet up with financial requirements. Special schools may be specifically designed, staffed and resourced to provide the appropriate special education for children with additional needs. These schools can be adequately equipped to meet the learning IQ of the children, especially who have been on the streets for a long period and can no longer meet up with the level of their counterparts. Special schools provide individualized education, addressing specified needs. Student-teacher ratio are kept low, often 6: 1 or lower depending upon the needs of the children.<sup>51</sup>

The researcher also believes that the Church can reorganize the available mission schools to accommodate those children whose parents cannot afford to pay the exorbitant school fees which presently prevents them from entering classes or enrolling in schools. If the existing government schools were properly organized, managed and funded, the government of

Anambra would not have conceded to handing back most schools to the Church. Therefore, for us to meet the required pastoral excellence through education, and school system, the children on the streets should be put into consideration, without discrimination of any sort. This calls for inclusivity in all churches pastoral institutions. In public theology, exclusivity is evil.

Other important areas of the Church's pastoral responsibilities that requires more action are affordable HEALTH SERVICES to the children living on the streets in form of free medical boots, emergency services, and affordable drugs in collaboration with the WHO.

One of Jesus' ways of evangelizing was healing which we may at times interpret as miracles; also feeding, which is a form of FOOD APOSTOLATE to the hungry. The Church may create jobs such as Agricultural fields in her numerous vast areas of Land around the State. She may not always build large Churches on all the Land spaces acquired, rather, she may sponsor mechanized farming and get those children on the streets who are able to work for pay and see to it that they are well paid. In such farm Lands, Chapels could be built for worship and few residential hots are erected to accommodate the youngsters. Such area could eventually develop into becoming a settlement for then with some educational and training facility to give them normal life, and that gradually helps to withdraw the children from the streets.

Here also comes in a better opportunity and atmosphere for SPIRITUAL AND MORAL care for the children. You can notice that Spiritual and Moral care comes last in our presentation of the Church's responsibilities. we do not in anyway make that less important, but in the logic of pastoral attention, we would rather prefer to ensure that you are dispose and relaxed, willing to pay attention before we begin any catechesis. A child who is disturbed

<sup>51</sup> Azebeokhai B. O. (2011). Physical Disabilities: Caused or a Curse? St. Stephen Press Inc., Onitsha Nigeria.

and hungry or sick certainly will not be ready to receive spiritual homilies. No wonder St James in his experiences with the poor people during his time, argues: "Religion that is pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to care for the orphans and widows in their affliction and to keep oneself unstained by the world." (Jas. 1: 27 NAB)<sup>52</sup>. When we are able, as a Church, to create a good atmosphere for evangelism, that is, making the Land fertile for cultivation, then our Gospel message will bear much fruit.

#### **E. PASTORAL CARE OF INCLUSIVITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE**

What is pastoral care of inclusivity? An attempt to respond to this question first brings one's mind to the marginalizing word "Outsider." This has been a word which characterized the historical Judeo-Christian community and is still painfully ruling almost every aspect of our Christian and social-cultural living today. We begin to understand the meaning of "Inclusivity" through the understanding of its negative word "Exclusive" "Outside". Exclusive could be seen or understood in two ways – one seeing self as more special, greater, more valuable than the other person, and or one seeing the other as "Not a part of us", not welcomed, infidel, outcast, inferior, and not wanted.

The Christian dispensation does not tolerate the outsiders, but much more seriously, it is the outsiders who become the catalysts for a radical new quality of inclusivity, such inclusivity is not compatible with any form of exclusivity, religious or otherwise. Jesus consistently chooses and prioritizes the outsider: the fishermen, the sick, the poor, the disenfranchised, the Samaritans. St. Paul presses the inclusivity even further by embracing all those labelled as Gentiles. <sup>53</sup>O'Murchu in his "Inclusivity: a Gospel of Mandate", discourses the

Culture of table fellowship, using the insights of Jerome Neyrey, 1996 who provided a valuable contextual overview of the prevailing norms and expectations around table fellowship at the time of the historical Jesus. According to him, Neyrey outlines a schema of mapping out both structures and expectations related to who eats with whom, what is eaten, where, when, how. Such schema as: "Likes eating with likes, family eating with family, pharisees with pharisees, where people sit at a meal, sitting arrangements<sup>54</sup> – such as may have happened in the feeding of five and four thousand, and better interpreted at the meal at the tax collector's house:

While he was at table in his (Matthew's)house, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat with Jesus and his disciples. The Pharisees saw this and said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collector and sinners?" (Mat. 9: 10, 11. NAB).

<sup>52</sup> "You shall not wrong any widow or orphan. If ever you wrong them, and they cry out to me, I will surely listen to their cry. My wrath will flare up, and I will kill you with the sword; then your own wives will be widows, and your children orphans." (See Exodus 22:21) In the Old Testament, orphans and widows are classic examples of the defenseless and oppressed.

<sup>53</sup> See Diarmuid O'Murchu, (2015) Inclusivity and Gospel Mandate. Claretian Communications Foundation, Inc., Philippines. P.12.

<sup>54</sup> ... pg. 84, 85.

The response of Jesus to the above query was educative, v. 12b "Those who are well (righteous) do not need a physician (Pastor), but the sick (sinner) do. V. 13 "Go and learn the meaning of the words, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice. I did not come to call the righteous but sinners.'" The implication of these statements of Jesus is a change of scenario, a shift in paradigm wherein the culture of exclusivity is replaced with the culture of inclusivity.

What, then, is inclusion? In the context of our discourse, I will like to see "Inclusion" as "The belonging". Every individual has a fundamental need and right to belong, somewhere, in family, in a peer group, in community, in a society etc. the term inclusion is used to refer to the wish to include persons with special conditions in all aspects of life in the community.

Pastoral care should therefore be all inclusive, Church programs or activities, institutions especially of learning, should be all inclusive. Pastoral inclusivity focusses on adjusting the Church and mission programs so that all children, including those on the streets can have the opportunity to interact, learn and develop in accordance with their potentials. The overall aim is to ensure that persons with special needs obtain a good quality of life within their environment. One serious problem we have in Anambra State today is the growing number of persons who are excluded from meaningful participation in the economic, social, religious, political and cultural life of their communities, this in turn affects the living standards of children and push them into the streets. Salamanca Statement<sup>55</sup> asserts that such society or community is neither efficient nor safe.

In area of Education for all, inclusion means full inclusion of children / students with diverse abilities in all aspects of schooling that other children are able to access and enjoy, irrespective of the individual's background or situation. The concept of inclusion must be based on the system of values instead of the predominant focus on the type of educational placement. It involves regular schools and classrooms genuinely adapting and changing to meet the needs of all children, as well as celebrating and valuing differences.<sup>56</sup> This definition does not imply that children with diverse abilities will not receive specialized assistance nor teaching outside of the classroom when required, rather that this is just one of many options that are available to, and in fact required of all children.<sup>57</sup> Our pastoral system therefore, must go beyond the popular communal integration to holistic inclusion of the youngsters into the family of God on mission.

"Why did Jesus say that He was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel (Matthew 15: 24)?"

This is one of the Gospel passages which by misinterpretation, has led to gross exclusivity in our

<sup>55</sup>The UNESCO Salamanca Statement (1994) Adoption. Adopted by the World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality. <http://www.csie.org.uk/inclusion/unesco-salamanca.shtml>.

<sup>56</sup> Powers, Stephen. (2002). From Concepts to Practice in Deaf Education: A United Kingdom Perspective on Inclusion. Journal of deaf studies and deaf education. 7. 230-43. 10.1093/deafed/7.3.230.

<sup>57</sup>Loreman, T., & Deppeler, J. (2002). Working towards full inclusion in education. Access: The National Issues Journal for People with a Disability, 3 (6). 5-8.

Christian world and have infiltrated into the wider world. It is agreed that every ministry must have priorities, and Christ's ministry was no exception. When Jesus sent His disciples to preach the good news of the kingdom, He expressly told them, "Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew 10: 5-6 NAB). Jesus did not forbid their preaching to all Gentiles; He did, however, narrow their focus to the areas which should be most receptive—those who knew the Law and were expecting the Messiah. Paul, in his missionary journeys, followed the same priority of preaching to the Jews first (Romans 1: 16. NAB).

Jesus' words to the Canaanite woman served as a test of her faith. She came to Jesus believing that He was the "Lord," the "Son of David," and the giver of mercy (Matthew 15: 22. NAB). His delayed answer and seemingly exclusionary statement brought from her a further, passionate, public expression of her faith in His unlimited power (Matthew 15: 27. NAB). This act of compassion and healing of a Gentile is a beautiful picture of Christ's ministry to the whole world—the Jewish Messiah is also the Savior of all who will believe (Matthew 28: 19; John 10: 16; Acts 10: 34-36; Revelation 5: 9. NAB).

**F. AN OVERVIEW OF CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING**  
 From pure religious point of view, in "*To Heal a Fractured World: The Ethics of Responsibility*", Rabbi Jonathan Sacks<sup>58</sup> describes how social justice has a central place in Judaism. One of Judaism's most distinctive and challenging ideas is its ethics of responsibility reflected in the concepts of *Simcha ("Gladness" or "Joy")*, *tzedakah ("The religious obligation to perform charity and philanthropic acts")*, *Chesed ("Deeds of kindness")*, and *Tikkun olam ("repairing the world")*. This social teaching equally informed the life experiences of Jesus during his time with which he influenced his followers by way of teaching, actions and rebukes of those who went against those religious values and traditions.

Catholic Social teaching comprises those aspects of Roman Catholic doctrines which relate to matters dealing with the collective aspect of humanity. A distinctive feature of Catholic social teaching is its concern for the poorest of the poor members of the society. Two of the seven key areas<sup>59</sup> of Catholic social teaching are pertinent to social justice:

**1. Life and dignity of the human person:** The foundational principle of all Catholic social teaching is the sanctity of all human life and the inherent dignity of every

<sup>58</sup>Sacks J. H., (2009) Article:Re'eh (5769) – Judaism's Vision for Social Justice. <http://rabbisacks.org/covenant-conversation-5769-reeh-greatness-and-humility/>Jonathan Henry Sacks; born 8 March 1948, is a British Orthodox rabbi, philosopher, theologian, author and politician. He served as the **Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth** from 1991 to 2013. As the spiritual head of the **United Synagogue**, the largest synagogue body in the UK, he was the **Chief Rabbi** of those Orthodox synagogues, but was not recognized as the religious authority for the Haredi **Union of Orthodox Hebrew Congregations** or for the progressive movements such as **Masorti, Reform** and **Liberal** Judaism. As Chief Rabbi, Sacks formally carried the title of **Av Beit Din** (head) of the **London Beth Din**. He is now known as the Emeritus Chief Rabbi. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jonathan\\_Sacks](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jonathan_Sacks)

<sup>59</sup> Seven Key Themes of Catholic Social Teaching

human person. Human life must be valued above all material possessions.

**2. Preferential Option for the Poor and Vulnerable:** Jesus taught that on the *Day of Judgement* God will ask what each person did to help the poor and needy: "Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these *least brothers* of mine, you did for me."<sup>60</sup> The Catholic Church teaches that through words, prayers and deeds one must show solidarity with, and compassion for the poor. When instituting public policy, the "preferential option for the poor" should always be kept at the forefront. The moral test of any society is "how it treats its most vulnerable members. The poor have the most urgent moral claim on the conscience of the nation. People are called to look at public policy decisions in terms of how they affect the poor,"<sup>61</sup> be it religion or civil.

By this preferential option, the Church teaches the theology of the "other". It is a situation where one directs attention towards the other person whom one feels he or she is more opportune when compared with. A charitable option of giving priority to the poor, the street children before those who can do things by themselves. It requires not necessarily giving alms to them but giving more attention to helping them to help themselves.

The Encyclical on Reconstruction of the Social Order (QA), encourages a living wage, subsidiarity, and teaches that social justice is a personal virtue as well as an attribute of the social order. Society can be just only if individuals and institutions are just.<sup>62</sup> On his own part, our revered Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, in his 2016 Encyclical, *Deus Caritas Est* (DC), teaches that justice is the defining concern of the state and central concern of politics, and not the Church, but quickly added, which (Church) has charity as its central social concern. The laity has the specific responsibility of pursuing social justice in civil society. The Church's active role in social justice should be to inform the debate, using reason and natural law, also by providing moral and spiritual formation for those involved in politics.<sup>63</sup>

## G. Way Forward

A typical African Traditional Community trains every child in an informal way, having no formal way of teaching skills or imparting knowledge to children. Traditional culture and values have positive impact in the education of an African child. This is taught mainly by doing, listening, watching etc. African society is inclusive by nature and so education takes place everywhere being functional or appropriate. Traditionally, the curriculum was designed and taught in a manner that was community oriented, practical and

<sup>60</sup>Mathew 25: 40. NAB.

<sup>61</sup> Option for the Poor, *Major Themes from Catholic Social Teaching*. Office for Social Justice, Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis.

<sup>62</sup> Pope Pius XI (1931) Q A # 79 -80, 88, 96,97. The entire 145 points popular 40<sup>th</sup> year anniversary encyclical of the Holy Father dwelt extensively on the social order of economic and justice in the world, with special reference to the encyclical of his predecessor Pope Leo XIII on the condition of workers, ownership of property and social justice.

<sup>63</sup> The official Catholic doctrine on social justice can be found in the book *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, published in 2004 and updated in 2006, by the Pontifical Council *Iustitia et Pax*.

usefully applied to meet the diverse needs of all children. Any child, whether able or incapable was the responsibility of the entire community, because of the strong extended family bond.

African tradition is inclusive in nature and does not believe in the existence of individuals but of family, community and society. It believes in the celebration of unity in diversity.

Because these cultural norms and values of the society were not documented in a written form, the influence of formal education and inter-culture caused most of these original traditions to gradually be replaced with other beliefs, which characterize inability as a manifestation of mysterious fate, perhaps God's will. This has led to some people interacting with these "special" children with reservation and some parents beginning to hide their weak and incapable children from the public view, because of shame over having such child in the family who may bring misfortune upon it. Such beliefs led to abuse, neglect and abandonment, and children's potentials to contribute to the development of the nation is dismissed. Gradually, society is beginning to isolate them, segregate them and become less interested in their well-being, so, less attention is given to their education.

In the 1950s, two movements converged to address the issue of educating children with disabilities of all kinds; the Civil Rights Movement in the wake of the Supreme Court decision (1954). The UNSS<sup>64</sup> stated the principle that children should be educated in inclusive schools and inclusive schools are the most effective at building solidarity between children with special needs and their peers. Solidarity between children lead to one population of children being educated, not two; the challenged and non-challenged children, the children of the well-to-do and the children of the not-well-to-do.<sup>65</sup>

Despite encouraging developments, there are still an estimated 113 million primary school age children who are not attending School.<sup>66</sup> 90% of these children live in low and lower middle-income Countries and over 80 million of these children live in Africa, Nigeria inclusive. Of those who do enroll in Primary Schools, large numbers drop out before completing their primary education. This is because current strategies and programs have largely been insufficient or inappropriate regarding needs of children and youths who are vulnerable to marginalization and exclusion.

For the children on the street and of course, all special needs children, the whole project of special educational-pastoral program is to be rehabilitation oriented. Its purpose is

to teach them basic skills needed for independence such as academic skill of reading, writing, speaking, social skills of getting along with other children, following instructions schedules and other daily routines while career and job skills are taught in vocational rehabilitation centers for the academic non-functional ones, although, I recommend all

<sup>64</sup> UNSS (1994)

<sup>65</sup>Lilianfonds (2010). Culled from: Lecture by the coordinator of Lilian Foundation (NGO) to Lilian Mediators Nigeria at a workshop on disability management, Enugu 2010.

<sup>66</sup> International Consultative Forum on Education for All (2000). <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001200/120058e.pdf>

without exception to willingly embrace skill acquisition programs, seeing the present heart-breaking economic situation in Nigeria, the present day "no available jobs" syndrome.

However, special education entails the individually planned and systematically monitored arrangement of physical settings, special equipment and materials, teaching procedure and other interventions designed to help these special needs children to achieve the greatest possible personal self-sufficiency or actualization and academic success.

Features in this educational rehabilitation would include: -

*The residential school, The special school, The regular school with these alternative services – 1. The special class, 2. The inerrant teachers, 3. The tutorial services, 4. The teacher consultant and, 5. The resource rooms.*

**The Residential School:** this is a boarding school for a group of challenged children.

**The Special School:** this is a school for single class of disability, example is school for the gifted, although it may include some other group together, however, the attend from homes.

**The Regular School:** this is the normal school with these other alternative educational plans that help the special needs children to benefit from the studies in the normal school. This is the type of school system which BEMSI foundation wishes to embark upon to enhance holistic training for the children. It is also all inclusive.

These correspond to segregation, partial segregation and integration in special education procedure. The Nigerian National Policy on Education (NPE) is supportive of integration of the challenged and poor learners with the other normal children in regular schools with these alternative plans. **Partial segregation** provides for units or classrooms, for instance, for the physically challenged in ordinary schools with their own specialist teachers teaching them separately as according to their needs.

**Segregation** denotes those in residential schools who are separated even from their families and other children except during holidays when they will mix with the other children. **Integration** allows for youngsters to learn to live early in life with the non-challenged, thus the prejudices, and discrimination and stigma will be eliminated, these are the different ways of educating the youngsters according to their various abilities.

The researcher hereby encourages the Church and other agents of pastoral care, public theologians and academics who are into education industries to take up this challenge and make education in Anambra State a realistic venture for every child. The Christian Church especially, who have already embraced Educational industry as a sure means of pastoral mission, have the capacity to redirect her education mission to benefit the children on the streets and other challenged children, making their schools and other institutions of learning assessible and affordable to them with the provision of Basic Academic Skills, Personal and Social competence, Occupational Skills, Self-help skills, Social skills and Household skills.

"**Functional literacy**" of course, depend on the intellectual ability of the child. The motivating factor is to aid the individual to maximize and realize his or her

academic potential/potentials. But above all, the educational rehabilitation should have a strong prevocational education program preceding vocational training aimed at introducing the youngsters into a variety of opportunities and skills.

#### **4. PUBLIC THEOLOGY AND PASTORAL CARE TO STREET CHILDREN**

For the aim of this research thesis, this chapter discusses public theology in relation to pastoral care to street children in a general sense, and then narrowed down to the situation in Anambra State, Nigeria as our research case study. The topic will be examined under three sub-headings.

##### **A. Concept of Public Theology**

There are three main branches of Christian theology – **Historical Theology, Systematic Theology** and, **Applied Theology**; sometimes called “**practical theology**”. For the sake of this research we are concerning our discourse with the area of Applied Theology in which public theology is linked. **Applied theology** is the critical thinking about the meaning and truth of Christian faith and witness, in terms of its practical credibility at this time, in this place.<sup>67</sup>

**Public Theology**, as already defined above,<sup>68</sup> is “a part of Applied Theology, which reflects *critically* on the *ethical* and *political implication*, here and now, of claims expressed or implied in religious faith and witness, and does so in the *public sphere*,<sup>69</sup> in publicly accessible ways”. Public theology focusses on issues of public concern. It is about drawing on the resources, insights and compassionate values of the Christian faith to contribute to the welfare of Society. Public theology is expected to offer more than an interpretation of principles, values or insights from scripture and tradition applied to

<sup>67</sup>David Bromell has a PhD in Systematic Theology from Otago (1990). He is a Principal Advisor in the Ministry of Social Development and a Senior Associate of the Institute of Policy Studies, School of Government, Victoria University of Wellington.

<sup>68</sup>See Definition of terms.

<sup>69</sup> Sebastian Kim (2011). *Theology in the Public Sphere: Public Theology as a Catalyst for Open Debate*. London: SCM, 2011.xi + 260pp.

<http://themelios.thegospelcoalition.org/review/theology-in-the-public-sphere-public-theology-as-a-catalyst-for-open-debate>.

The meaning and function of public theology is by no means an unequivocally agreed matter. For some, it is an undogmatic engagement with the issues society faces. For others, it amounts to an ecclesial critique of the social, political, economic, moral, etc. dimensions of life. Still others advocate for a total collapse of the artificial chasm between the sacred and the profane, the religious and the secular, the public and the private, the church and the wider society. Kim advocates a dialogical or conversational paradigm in public theology. In Kim's own words, 'Public theology is Christians engaging in dialogue with those outside church circles on various issues of common interest' (p. 3). He identifies conversation to be the key word and a key concept for public theology that underlines its praxis-oriented methodology. Academically, a legitimate question arises about the disciplinary identity and locus of public theology. What makes public theology distinguishable from political and/or liberation theologies?

John Benington 2011, 43, defines the public sphere as “the web of values, places, organizations, rules, knowledge, and other cultural resources held in common by people through their everyday commitments and behaviors, and held in trust by government and public institutions”.

contemporary questions of public life.<sup>70</sup> Public theology is more than keeping ‘the faith’ in the public sphere, on matters of public life. Public theology, as a form of applied theology is not a direct expression of faith and witness. It is second-order reflection that thinks critically, at this time, in this place, about the meaning and truth of claims expressed and implied by religious faith and witness. It focusses on the ethical and political implications of religious self-understanding and life praxis<sup>71</sup>

Institutional Christianity does not have the exclusive rights to doing theology. Since Plato, the concept of “theology” assumed the systematization of ideas on the transcendent divine. Today, the practice of theology is to be found in both the professional academy and in public square. According to Van Aarde 2008, 1, “Spirituality is not to be reserved for people longing for God within the context of today’s mass consumerist populist culture, while religion is reserved for ecclesial institutions, spirituality and religion overlap”. This appears to be the case of the Church and other religions in Anambra State of Nigeria, wherein only those who feel like exercising some act of spirituality goes out to make some temporal donations or assistance to the children on the streets in the name of sacrifice offering, while on the other hand, religion is so ‘institutionalized’, ‘parochialized’, over ‘doctrinized’, over ‘hierarchized’ and over divinized. In Anambra State, the act of worship is generally perceived as going to stay in the Church daily and shouting prayers to God in closed doors, and to Mosques every Friday. Many Christians spend their whole time in the monasteries “praying to God”, but not realizing that the God they seek out there is at their door steps, on the streets and in their neighborhood begging for love and care. There is urgent need to understand that the fundament of Christianity is Love, an example which Jesus our model altruistically left with us. This takes us into the next reflection in which we examine the theological foundation of pastoral care which is the actual ‘doing’ of public theology.

Professor Stephen Van Erp, on the History, Definition, concepts and Issues of Public Theology asserts that Public theology is the conversation with other citizens on issues wider than religious matters. For him, “Public theology is a descriptive<sup>72</sup> and normative<sup>73</sup> way of reflecting on public issues, institutions, and interactions”<sup>74</sup>

As an academic discipline, Public theology could be seen as a response to experiences of suffering, inequality, and injustice, it addresses the Churches, the University, and the wider public.

For Hak Joon Lee, Public theology mostly seeks the transformation of the political order, not its annihilation.

<sup>70</sup>See Bromell, David(2011, 4). Article: *What is public theology?* file:///C:/Users/user/Desktop/Public%20theology/What%20is%20public%20theology%20by%20David%20Bromell.pdf

<sup>71</sup>(ibid: 5).

<sup>72</sup> Descriptive: Because it presents the different roles of religion and faith in the public sphere.

<sup>73</sup>Normative: Because it finds a starting point in descriptive social experiences. Experiences that call for a thoughtful and faithful response.

<sup>74</sup>See Van Erp, (2017). *Salvation in the World: The Crossroads of Public theology (Introduction)*. <https://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/salvation-in-the-world-9780567678171/>

He pointed out that Public theology operates with four characteristics – “It is apologetic in Character, critique of liberal notions of ethics, its promotion of universal moral values, and its search for the presence of God in our present situation”<sup>75</sup>

On his part, Sebastian Kim, again examining Theology in the public sphere and its historical development, asserts:

- Public theology performs crucial prophetic task within societies, public theologians seek to contribute to social, political, and cultural transformation. Public theology begins from faith.<sup>76</sup>

In his discourse, Kim tries to convince the public of the value and relevance of faith and theology for the well-being of the society. That public theology should avoid turning into a narrow academic discipline, and that it must seek to have an impact on the daily lives of Christians. He agrees with Van Erf in his argument that we need the interpretation of the public realm as a place where God becomes present. Van Erf unfolds three types of Public Theology, vis: “Accommodationism”, “Dialogue”, and “Particularism” which he said he prefers to others, hence he proposed to read modern Catholic theology as a particular way of thinking theologically about the public sphere. Finally, Erp suggests that “Modern citizenship contains an implicit trust and an implicit oath to participate in the common good”<sup>77</sup>

Another interesting contributor to the discourse of Public Theology is Max Stackhouse. Stackhouse argues in globalization and grace for the positive contribution of public theology in addressing the issues of the globalized world. He believes that faith and theology can provide existential and ethical foundations in our contemporary, fragmented, trans-cultural, and global society. Stackhouse asserts: “It is the task of public theology to formulate reasonable arguments for the religious and moral values in society.”<sup>78</sup> He generally agrees with the other researchers that Public theology should offer a normative, and if necessary, transformative guidance to the public. WaribokoNimi 2010, in his Ethical Methodology: Between Public Theology and Public Policy, affirms that public theologians aspire to develop ethical frameworks and discourses about how we should live together in plural civil societies. He observed that public theology has taken on the responsibility of clarifying the religious and ethological foundations of policies and ideas that shape civil societies.

## B. The Theological and Cultural Foundations of Pastoral Care in Anambra State

### 1. Scriptural Foundation

Pastoral care is the actual doing of public theology, when the love of God in us is extended in action to those around us, especially those who live on the margin. It is theology beyond theory, beyond sermons and write ups. Pastoral care is one practical way of doing mission. When God gathered His people Israel as a family, one of His first

<sup>75</sup>Ibid.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Stackhouse, Max (2016). Public Theology and Political Economy; *Christian Stewardship in Modern Society*. <https://www.amazon.com/Public-Theology-Political-Economy-Stackhouse/dp/0819183016>

command to them was love to one another, a pastoral attention to all who were less fortunate in their midst

Even if they were strangers among them:

If one of your kindred is in need in *any community* in the land which the LORD, your God, is giving you, you shall not harden your heart nor close your hand against your kin who is in need. Instead, you shall freely open your hand and generously lend what suffices to meet that need (Deut. 15: 7-8, NAB/Ex. 23: 10-11)<sup>79</sup>.

The above passage, like similar passages in the old Testament gives us clearer picture of the economic situation of the people of God in those times and how God, through Moses and the leaders of the time tried to organize the economy to accommodate everybody, both the rich, the poor, the young and the old. Every law, borrowing from the Law of God through Moses and the prophets is meant to balance the economy for the common good. (see Prov. 3: 27 NAB). The tithes we collect in the Churches, according to the Deuteronomic codes, are meant for the disadvantaged in the community, tithes of the third year were specifically assigned for that purpose (See Deut. 26: 12 -15; Lev. 27: 30 - 34 NAB), the question then remains; how much is this command been fulfilled in the Church in Anambra State?

God’s intention for all people is to be a community living in love, a communal life where everything is shared in common, and to meet the needs of those who cannot afford those things by themselves. He charged every individual with this leadership service and equally appointed individuals to implement those regulations, to ensure there were no person amongst them left in need. It is certainly true that there can be no society without the poor, “Of course there will never cease to be poor in the land; I command you therefore: always be open-handed with your brother (and sister), and with anyone in your country who is in need and poor” (v. 11). This verse 11 lays more emphasis on the importance of turning attention to the poorest of the poor by the leaders of the covenant community, whom we can conveniently refer to today as Christians. It is the *utopian*<sup>80</sup> ideal of the abolition of poverty.<sup>81</sup>

We cannot therefore claim to be true people of God or worship Him if we neglect these command of love, this is true Christian practice, the true religion. When God gave this command to care for those on the margin as described above, by implication, He instituted Pastoral care which the Church is commissioned to implement through her Public Theology. We have heard the Good News proclaimed over the centuries, we have received it in good

<sup>79</sup>It refers to the sabbatical year which was promulgated for the sake of the poor in the Land; it is a fallow year for the sake of the Land. It is a time for remission of debts (Lev.25:1-7). A brother in the passage means also neighbor, a fellow member of the Covenant Community (cf. Lev. 19: 11-18, RSV Annotated Version). If God’s will be fully obeyed, there would be no poverty. (May G. Herbert and Metzger Bruce; Commentary; The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha, RSV, 1977).

<sup>80</sup>Utopian: An idealistic reformer.

<sup>81</sup>Raymond Brown, Joseph Fitzmyer & Roland Murphy, 1989. The New Jerome Biblical Commentary:102. *Periodic Religious Duties (Deut. 14: 22-16:17)*. Claretians & St. Pauls Publications, Philippines.

faith, and we are saturated by the gospel message, all we need to see in the Church now is actions, practical Christianity. This is the foundation of pastoral care. It became the culture and religious practice of the Israelites, no one was left on the streets, not even the orphaned children, not even the widows, but then, how did manipulation and marginalization enter into our society? Andries Van Aarde asserts:

In biblical times culture and religion could not be distinguished. That is why it was possible for a "theologian" in the market place to speak about religion in a highly intellectual fashion. The private arena was seen as more holy and much preferable to the public arena which was seen as less holy and less acceptable. That led to the distinction between "insider" and "outsider". This is the operation basis for manipulation, exploitation and exclusion which, centuries later, led to revolutions by the bourgeoisie and "less miserable". Distinguishing between the acceptable *here* and the unacceptable *there* was a Christian inheritance from Greek metaphysics.

Jesus was the first critical voice of the above metaphysics but ironically, "Roman Christianization" / Eurocentric Religion never took him seriously. Jesus brought "insider" and "outsider" together. He preached in integrity (See Mat. 5: 48; Lv. 19: 2; Lk. 6: 36.).<sup>82</sup>

It is of great importance to note that the above Greco-Jewish marginalizing tendencies so much degenerated and penetrated the entire society to the extent that Jesus had to dedicate his entire pastoral life towards these pushed out of the community into the streets (cf. Lk. 4: 18 – 30 NAB). His pastoral focus became a challenge and a threat to the Chief priests and elders, he became a lone voice crying out in the wilderness for a change of attitude, for true repentance and true love for all, no wonder he gave us the "Beatitudes"<sup>83</sup>. The center of Jesus' life and preaching became that of pastoral inclusivity, from north, south, east, and west he brought all people together, there was no more "Gentile" nor "Jew". When he fed the multitude on the hill-top, he included all – the old, young, sick, women children, the so-called outsiders (Gentiles or Samaritans) all sat together in colonies and ate together (Mat. 6: 34 – 43 NAB), this was a communal meal. Jesus used this meal to heal divisions among the people, he used the meal to teach the importance of being together, no one was left out. It was a meal of inclusivity prefiguring the sacrificial Eucharistic meal, a meal of love.

Remarking on these characteristics of biblical communal meals, in reaction to the style of meal fellowships in our present-day church in which the poor and the street children are left out, O'Murchu remarks:

... those of a certain economic status were considered blessed by God in their wealth and therefore considered

<sup>82</sup>Aarde V.A (2008). What is "theology" in "public theology" and what is "public" about. Pg. 1224).[http://www.scielo.org.za/scielo.php?script=sci\\_arttext&pid=S0259-9422200800030005](http://www.scielo.org.za/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0259-9422200800030005)

<sup>83</sup>The sermon on the Mount sounds the keynote of the new age which Jesus came to introduce. The Beatitudes proclaim God's favour toward those who aspire to live under his rule. Poor in spirit, those who feel a deep sense of spiritual poverty (cf. Lk. 4:20-21; 6:17, 20-23; Is.66:2. NAB). It is some consoling / encouraging blessings for the true pastoral workers.

only their own type as suitable companions at the common table. The poor stayed with the poor and the rich with the rich. In this way, the economic classes were stratified, and the facility for reciprocity was streamlined.<sup>84</sup>

"Israel, in the Old Testament, was not chosen in order to keep everyone else out of God's fold; Israel was chosen to make it possible for everyone else eventually to be included". He queried also that "it is our Christian devotion to the Eucharist that seriously jeopardizes the subversive inclusivity of Gospel food sharing". According to him, we put so much emphasis on the Last Supper – and its exclusive nature with allegedly only the twelve apostles present – that we do a grave injustice to the egalitarian practice of Gospel commensality and Jesus' unambiguous love for the open table. The preaching and teaching of Jesus made greater sense after people have experienced the liberation and empowerment of inclusive fellowship."<sup>85</sup>

The prophetic literature presented a wide range of social traits. This led to the social problem under the monarchy. The Prophet Amos, a social prophet, castigated the abnormalities in the Jewish system: oppression of the poor, the denial of fundamental rights to the poor, harsh laws and exaction of debts were crimes against the poor. Amos strongly rebuked these crimes (Amos 2: 7, 4: 1, 5: 11 NAB). Isaiah, on his part, was not silent over the oppression of the poor and marginalized, and the inhuman treatment meted out to the needy in his time (Is. 5: 8). The Psalmist cried out against the Judges who failed to render justice to the poor and needy and to protect them from oppressions of the wicked rich few (Psalm 82: 3 – 4. NAB).

The church in Anambra State, and of course, Nigeria in general should go beyond the preaching of Jesus' suffering which was forced on him, and focus more on his pastoral, prophetic courage and passion for a society characterized by justice, equity, freedom and new hope for those relegated to the margin. The Parable of the lost Sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son, in the Gospel of Luke chapter 15 expands more hermeneutically on the foundation of pastoral care, especially to children who are on the streets of Anambra State, who perhaps, by no conscious fault of theirs are no longer connected with the Holy Family of God on Mission. They neither pray, nor receive the sacraments the healing communal meals of the family of God that Jesus gathered together here on earth, commanding and praying that all may be one, and in onefold. In the parables of the sheep and of the lost coin, Jesus reminds the Church in Anambra State to leave the Ninety-nine still in the Church now, already enjoying care

<sup>84</sup> Diarmuid O'Murchu(2015: 89).Cretian communications Foundation, Inc. Philippines.

<sup>85</sup>Diarmuid O' Murchu, MSC (2015), critiquing the exclusivity in Communal celebrations of our time which has affected the Church's Eucharistic Celebrations in comparison with the Gospel mandate of Inclusivity.Diarmaid O'Murchu, a member of the Sacred Heart Missionary Order, and a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin Ireland, is a social psychologist most of whose working life has been in social ministry, predominantly in London, UK. In that capacity he has worked as a couple's counsellor, in bereavement work, AIDS-HIV counselling, and, in more recent times, with homeless people and refugees.

and protection, enjoying the dividends of socio-economic and socio-theological status, and then go out to seek those poor youngsters on the streets who have no hope of survival.

As there was rejoicing and gladness at the feeding of the more than five thousand hungry people by Jesus, so there will be rejoicing and gladness in heaven and in the Church at the return of those lost children into the fold and into their various families, this is the meaning of pastoral care. According to Kendal, the lost sheep and the lost coin symbolize those who are helpless. "He tends his flock like a shepherd: he gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young" (Isaiah40: 11).<sup>86</sup>

The parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10: 29 – 36 is imperative, and Jesus concluded that parable with a direct command; "Go and do likewise" (vs. 37b). Therefore, Pastoral Care could be interpreted as pastoral theology practiced at the grassroots level to benefit the marginalized in our society.

## 2. Conciliar and post-conciliar documents

From the Conciliar and Post-conciliar point of view, the Church in the past and in recent times have given us a whole lot of insights, directives and mandates on the need for urgent practical and comparing pastoral care to those relegated to the peripheries due to some unbearable circumstances which the find themselves in the society and the need for the Church in the modern World to be more proactive as part of the New Evangelization.

Paul VI, in the opening paragraph of his Document; *Lumen Gentium*...to the Fathers of the Second Vatical Council, wrote on the Mission of the Church:

Christ is the Light of nations. Because this is so, this Sacred Synod gathered together in the Holy Spirit eagerly desires, by proclaiming the Gospel to every creature, (1) to bring the light of Christ to all men, a light brightly visible on the countenance of the Church. Since the Church is in Christ like a sacrament or as a sign and instrument both of a very closely-knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race, it desires now to unfold more fully to the faithful of the Church and to the whole world its own inner nature and universal mission. This it intends to do following faithfully the teaching of previous councils. The present-day conditions of the world add greater urgency to this work of the Church so that all men, joined more closely today by various social, technical and cultural ties, might also attain fuller unity in Christ.<sup>87</sup>

In the paragraph, the Pope was totally inclusive in his choice of words, for him, the mission of the church must be directed to every human person irrespective of his state in life. That was the mandate of Jesus Christ. "The Church is a sheepfold whose one and indispensable door is Christ. It is a flock of which God Himself foretold He would be the shepherd, and whose sheep, although ruled by human shepherds; are nevertheless continuously led and

<sup>86</sup>see Kendall, R. T. (2004) *The Complete Guide to the Parables: Understanding and Applying the Stories of Jesus*. Pg. 244. Chosen Books, a Division of Baker Publishing Group, USA.

<sup>87</sup>L.G. 1964: Chap1, Par.1.

nourished by Christ Himself, the Good Shepherd and the Prince of the shepherds, who gave His life for the sheep.<sup>88</sup>

In the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (GS), Pope Paul VI writes:

The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts. For theirs is a community composed of men. United in Christ, they are led by the Holy Spirit in their journey to the Kingdom of their Father and they have welcomed the news of salvation which is meant for every man. That is why this community realizes that it is truly linked with mankind and its history by the deepest of bonds.<sup>89</sup>

The Holy Father through the synod reminds the Church of God's will that all persons are of one family and to treat one another in a spirit of brotherliness since we are all created in the image of God. In the Name of the Church, the Pontiff teaches the need to make available to all men everything necessary for leading a life truly human, such as food, clothing, and shelter; the right to choose a state of life freely and to found a family, the right to education, to employment, to a good reputation, to respect, to appropriate information, to activity in accord with the upright norm of one's own conscience, to protection of privacy and rightful freedom even in matters religious. Hence, the social order and its development must invariably work to the benefit of the human person if the disposition of affairs is to be subordinate to the personal realm and not contrariwise, as the Lord indicated when He said that the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.

Coming down to practical and particularly urgent consequences, this council lays stress on reverence for man; everyone must consider his every neighbor without exception as another self, taking into account first of all His life and the means necessary to living it with dignity, so as not to imitate the rich man who had no concern for the poor man Lazarus.

In our times a special obligation binds us to make ourselves the neighbor of every person without exception and of actively helping him when he comes across our path, whether he be an old person abandoned by all, a foreign laborer unjustly looked down upon, a refugee, a child born of an unlawful union and wrongly suffering for a sin he did not commit, or a hungry person who disturbs our conscience by recalling the voice of the Lord, "As long as you did it for one of these the least of my brethren, you did it for me" (Matt. 25: 40).<sup>90</sup>

Also;

Bishops, to whom is assigned the task of ruling the Church of God, should, together with their priests, so preach the news of Christ that all the earthly activities of the faithful will be bathed in the light of the Gospel. All pastors should remember too that by their daily conduct and concern they are revealing the face of the Church to the world, and men will judge the power and truth of the Christian

<sup>88</sup>*ibid.*

<sup>89</sup>G.S 1965:1.

<sup>90</sup>*Ibid.*

message thereby. By their lives and speech, in union with Religious and their faithful, may they demonstrate that even now the Church by her presence alone and by all the gifts which she contains, is an unspent fountain of those virtues which the modern world needs the most.

By unremitting study, they should fit themselves to do their part in establishing dialogue with the world and with men of all shades of opinion. Above all let them take to heart the words which this council has spoken: "Since humanity today increasingly moves toward civil, economic and social unity, it is more than ever necessary that priests, with joint concern and energy, and under the guidance of the bishops and the supreme pontiff, erase every cause of division, so that the whole human race may be led to the unity of God's family."<sup>91</sup>

In the opening paragraph of the Encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*, Pope John Paul II reminds the Church of her Missionary Mandate which is yet very far from completion, and we must commit ourselves wholeheartedly to its service. "*missionary activity is a matter for all Christians*, for all dioceses and parishes, Church institutions and associations." An invitation for the Church to "*renew her missionary commitment*." "to encourage theologians to explore and expound systematically the various aspects of missionary activity". The number of those who do not know Christ and do not belong to the Church is constantly on the increase. Indeed, since the end of the Council it has almost doubled. When we consider this immense portion of humanity which is loved by the Father and for whom he sent his Son, the urgency of the Church's mission is obvious. On the other hand, our own times offer the Church new opportunities in this field: we have witnessed the collapse of oppressive ideologies and political systems; the opening of frontiers and the formation of a more united world due to an increase in communications; the affirmation among peoples of the gospel values which Jesus made incarnate in his own life (peace, justice, brotherhood, concern for the needy); and a kind of soulless economic and technical development which only stimulates the search for the truth about God, about man and about the meaning of life itself.<sup>92</sup>

In paragraph 31 of the above document, commenting on the details of Mission *Ad Gentes*, the Pope reaffirms thus:

The Lord Jesus sent his apostles to every person, people and place on earth. In the apostles, the Church received a universal mission-one which knows no boundaries-which involves the communication of salvation in its integrity according to that fullness of life which Christ came to bring (cf. Jn. 10: 10). The Church was "sent by Christ to reveal and communicate the love of God to all people and nations."

This mission is one and undivided, having one origin and one final purpose; but within it, there are different tasks and kinds of activity. First, there is the missionary activity which we call *mission ad gentes*, in reference to the opening words of the Council's decree on this subject. This is one of the Church's fundamental activities: it is essential and never-ending. The Church, in fact, "cannot withdraw

from her permanent mission of bringing the Gospel to the multitudes the millions and millions of men and women-who as yet do not know Christ the Redeemer of humanity. In a specific way this is the missionary work which Jesus entrusted and still entrusts each day to his Church.<sup>93</sup>

Among other points, more strikingly, John Paul echoed; "Speaking of the future, we cannot forget the young, who in many countries comprise more than half the population. How do we bring the message of Christ to non-Christian young people who represent the future of entire continents? Clearly, the ordinary means of pastoral work are not sufficient: what are needed are associations, institutions, special centers and groups, and cultural and social initiatives for young people. This is a field where modern ecclesial movements have ample room for involvement."

In fidelity to the spirit of the Beatitudes, the Church is called to be on the side of those who are poor and oppressed in any way. I therefore exhort the disciples of Christ and all Christian communities - from families to dioceses, from parishes to religious institutes - to carry out a sincere review of their lives regarding their solidarity with the poor. At the same time, I express gratitude to the missionaries who, by their loving presence and humble service to people, are working for the integral development of individuals and of society through schools, health-care centers, leprosaria, homes for the handicapped and the elderly, projects for the promotion of women and other similar apostolates. I thank the priests, religious brothers and sisters, and members of the laity for their dedication, and I also encourage the volunteers from non-governmental organizations who in ever increasing numbers are devoting themselves to works of charity and human promotion.

It is in fact these "works of charity" that reveal the soul of all missionary activity: love, which has been and remains the driving force of mission and is also "the sole criterion for judging what is to be done or not done, changed or not changed. It is the principle which must direct every action, and end to which that action must be directed. When we act with a view to charity, or are inspired by charity, nothing is unseemly, and everything is good"<sup>94</sup>

Among other Popes who spoke and wrote radically on the condition of the poor and the Church's pastoral mission to them are, Pope John XXIII, in his passionate encyclical:<sup>95</sup>

As for the poor who complain of the wretchedness of their existence, they must know first of all, that we are quite as much distressed as they are by their lot. With a father's concern we too are anxious that justice - which is a Christian virtue - should have its proper place in social life and should regulate and govern inter-class relationships. But that is not the only reason for our grief. Our deepest regret is to see the enemies of the Church making capital out of the unjust conditions of the poor and winning them over to their own party by lying promises and false assertions.

John Paul II 1987,<sup>96</sup> emphasized on the evils of unemployment with special remark that it has become a

<sup>93</sup>Ibid.

<sup>94</sup>Ibid.

<sup>95</sup>Pope John XXIII, "*Ad Petri Cathedram*", London 1959:83.

phenomenal hazard that young able-bodied men and women roam about the streets and this must be a serious concern for everybody with conscience. "The phenomenon, too, with its series of negative consequences for individuals and for society, ranging from humiliation to the loss of that self-respect which every man and woman should have, prompts us to question seriously the type of development which has been followed over the past twenty years."<sup>97</sup> Each bishop too, as the pastor of a particular church, has a wide-ranging missionary duty. It falls to him "as the ruler and center of unity in the diocesan apostolate, to promote missionary activity, to direct and coordinate it. .. Let him also see to it that apostolic activity is not limited only to those who are already converted, but that a fair share both of personnel and funds be devoted to the evangelization of non-Christians.<sup>98</sup>

To Pope Francis is attributed the following important sayings as reminders to pastoral workers of the mandates of Jesus, a call to discipleship:

Jesus' three questions to Peter about love are followed by three commands: feed my lambs, feed my sheep. Let us never forget that authentic power is service, and that the Pope too, when exercising power, must enter ever more fully into that service which has its radiant culmination on the Cross. He must be inspired by the lowly, concrete and faithful service which marked Saint Joseph and, like him, he must open his arms to protect all of God's people and embrace with tender affection the whole of humanity, especially the poorest, the weakest, the least important, those whom Matthew lists in the final judgment on love: the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick and those in prison (cf. Mt 25: 31-46). Only those who serve with love are able to protect!<sup>99</sup>

In the Gospel, we read the parable of the Good Samaritan, that speaks of a man assaulted by robbers and left half dead at the side of the road. People pass by him and look at him. But they do not stop, they just continue on their journey, indifferent to him: it is none of their business! How often we say: it's not my problem! How often we turn the other way and pretend not to see! Only a Samaritan, a stranger, sees him, stops, lifts him up, takes him by the hand, and cares for him (cf. Lk 10: 29-35). Dear friends, I believe that here, in this hospital, the parable of the Good Samaritan is made tangible. Here there is no indifference, but concern. There is no apathy, but love.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>96</sup>John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 30 Dec. 1987:14

<sup>97</sup>Cf. Anyanwu, O, (2000:90) *The Church for Poverty, Justice and Liberation*. Assumpta Press, Owerri, Nigeria.

<sup>98</sup>John Paul II, 1990. *Redemptoris Missio (On the permanent validity of the Church's missionary mandate)* Given in Rome, at St. Peter's, on December 7, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Conciliar Decree *Ad Gentes*, in the year 1990, the thirteenth of my Pontificate.

<sup>99</sup> Francis 2013. Address to Representatives of the Communications Media [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/francesco/speeches/2013/march/documents/papafrancesco\\_20130316\\_rappresentanti-media\\_en.htm](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/francesco/speeches/2013/march/documents/papafrancesco_20130316_rappresentanti-media_en.htm)

<sup>100</sup>(... 2013, Providence)Address at St. Francis of Assisi of the Providence of God Hospital [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/francesco/speeches/2013/july/documents/papafrancesco\\_20130724\\_gmg-ospedale-rio\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/francesco/speeches/2013/july/documents/papafrancesco_20130724_gmg-ospedale-rio_en.html)

That is the purpose of our mission: to identify the material and immaterial needs of the people and try to meet them as we can. Do you know what agape is? It is love of others, as our Lord preached. It is not proselytizing, it is love. Love for one's neighbor, that leavening that serves the common good.<sup>101</sup>

Let us remember Paul VI's words: "For the Catholic Church, no one is a stranger, no one is excluded, no one is far away" (*Homily for the closing of the Second Vatican Council*, 8 December 1965). Indeed, we are a single human family that is journeying on toward unity, making the most of solidarity and dialogue among peoples in the multiplicity of differences.

The Church is mother, and her motherly attention is expressed with special tenderness and closeness to those who are obliged to flee their own country and exist between rootlessness and integration. This tension destroys people. Christian compassion — this "suffering with", compassion — is expressed first of all, in the commitment to obtain knowledge of the events that force people to leave their homeland, and, where necessary, to give voice to those who cannot manage to make their cry of distress and oppression heard. By doing this you also carry out an important task in sensitizing Christian communities to the multitudes of their brethren scarred by wounds that mark their existence: violence, abuse, the distance from family love, traumatic events, flight from home, uncertainty about the future in refugee camps. These are all dehumanizing elements and must spur every Christian and the whole community to practical concern.<sup>102</sup>

During this Holy Year of Mercy, we have not only considered the gift of God's mercy in itself, but also the works of mercy which we are called to practice as part of the Christian life. To paraphrase Saint James, we can say that mercy without works is dead. To be merciful like God our Father demands constant sensitivity to the needs, material and spiritual, of those around us. Jesus himself tells us in no uncertain terms that we will be judged by the mercy we show to the poor: those who hunger and thirst, the naked, the stranger, the sick and those in prison (cf. Mt 25: 35-36). Particularly in our prosperous societies, Christians are called to guard against the temptation of indifference to the plea of so many of our brothers and sisters. In our rapidly changing and increasingly globalized world, many new forms of poverty are appearing. In response to them, may we prove creative in developing new and practical forms of charitable outreach as an expression of the way of mercy.<sup>103</sup>

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uly/documents/papafrancesco\_20130724\_gmg-ospedale-rio\_en.html

<sup>101</sup>*Ibid.* Pope Francis, Interview with la Repubblica [http://www.repubblica.it/cultura/2013/10/01/news/pope\\_s\\_c\\_onversation\\_with\\_scalfari\\_english67643118/](http://www.repubblica.it/cultura/2013/10/01/news/pope_s_c_onversation_with_scalfari_english67643118/)

<sup>102</sup>*Ibid.* —Address to Participants in the Plenary of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People.

[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/francesco/speeches/2013/may/documents/papafrancesco\\_20130524\\_migrant-itineranti\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/francesco/speeches/2013/may/documents/papafrancesco_20130524_migrant-itineranti_en.html)

<sup>103</sup>Francis (2016) Address year of Mercy. [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/francesco/speeches/2013/july/documents/papafrancesco\\_20130724\\_gmg-ospedale-rio\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/francesco/speeches/2013/july/documents/papafrancesco_20130724_gmg-ospedale-rio_en.html)

### 3. From Other Pastoral Writings

A lot have equally been written by theologians and pastors of the Church on the issue of care of the needy and children on the streets, for the purpose of this research, I would like to mention and cite a very few comments from recent journals.

During the year of consecrated life, a theologian and Executive Secretary of the Conference of Major Superiors in the Philippines, Fr. Dexter Toledo, urged all to stand for the Church of the poor, reminding the Religious of their role to minister to the poor; "Each one has to his or her part through works of charity, particularly to the less fortunate". "This means laity and clergy alike are to join forces, working hand in hand in bringing the Church closer to the poor because Our Lord Jesus Christ was Himself poor like so many of our people." <sup>104</sup>

"The Church must continue to educate that the love of the poor is at the heart of the Gospel. Land, roof, and work, what you struggle for, are sacred rights. To claim this is nothing strange; it is the Social Doctrine of the Church. Solidarity is a word that is not always welcomed; however, it is a word that means much than some acts of sporadic generosity" <sup>105</sup>

### 4. Cultural Foundation

*"Onyeaghananwanneya"* (*Be your brother or sister's keeper*).

The Anambra Igbo is originally endowed with a deep cultural heritage which promotes a very humane fraternal relationship, it is pathetic that the penetration of the western influence, especially the British marginalizing and imperial way of living in the African soil have strongly influenced the present day Anambra Society that the people seem to jettison her cultural endowments including her Language, fast giving up her richly life-giving worded tribal language which identifies and unites them for the western (English) language which proves to separate brother from brother, turning sister against sister, and parents against children.

The researcher cannot adequately discourse the issue of pastoral care in Anambra State and recommend ways of improvement without researching and discoursing the ethical-theological and social-cultural background or foundation of pastoral care in the area. case study presents the original Igbo society as people who have very strong "*Umu-nna*" system of family ties. The *umu-nna* system is the traditional family kindred, which is a tie between the immediate family and the extended families. In most cases, it extends to the maternal home, interpreted as *Umudiana*, which gives full rights and privileges and protection to children born of both paternal and maternal homes. What this means is that a son or daughter of a man in village A has also rights and privileges in his or her maternal home village B. A child who is excommunicated from her father's home could take refuge in his or her maternal home with adequate protection, rights and privileges as for those originally born in the village.

<sup>104</sup> Toledo, D. (2014). *Stand Up for Church of the Poor; CBCP Monitor*, Vol. 18, No. 25, Dec. 8, 2014.

<sup>105</sup>Francis (2014). See CBCP Monitor. Vol 18, No. 23.

The ethos of relationship and care in the traditional Igbo culture is the one expressed in the Igbo proverbial "*onyeaghabanwanneya*" and is grounded in the biblical "**be your brother's keeper**" which the Igbos claimed or believed to be cultural inheritance from her fore-fathers - *Eri* son of Abraham. *Eri* was the father of *Nriborn* in the shores of Anambra Valley when the former and his companions arrived in AD700, from there *Nri* migrated to various parts of Igbo land and mixed with their original inhabitants.

**Religiosity:** The traditional Igbo is a very religious person, living in a totally religious environment, and motivated in all his actions by religious influences and impulses, internally and externally enhanced by his cultural institutions. The traditional Igbo religion homogenized animated and united the earlier Igbo community. The Igbo unity culture is demonstrated by the presence of some characteristics - *TheUmunna, Ikwunne, Omenala Igbo, the Oji, Ofo, Okpara headship, the Umuada, the Otuogbo (age grade), Ikwaizu (funeral ceremony), title taking, etc.* According to Msgr. Patrick Mmuo, "the unity of Igbo people and culture has important connections with the procedure for the inculturation of Igbo cultural institutions in the Church, and it is very important that all Igbo people should acknowledge this important truth today".

For the Igbo, salvation means popular well-being within the kinship community in this life and a similar state in the ancestral community of the spirit-world, with an assurance of the perpetuity of this cycle. The idea of living with God is not in the traditional Igbo mind. For the Igbo man, salvation requires a good moral life according to the customs of the land, normal physical development, possession of children and economic prosperity, and above all, the burial and second funeral rites. In the original Igbo culture, a good moral life is often limited to the standard enunciated by the customs or accepted by a particular community, and this is conditioned by the exigencies and welfare of the particular community. Hence, in some communities the same actions which would be condemned if done to a member of one's community, could be praised if done to a member of another community, but this practice is against the genuine *Nri-Igbo* culture. Such crimes as stealing, murder, adultery, incest, and child abuse are committed only by wicked people. witchcraft is regarded as the quintessence of wickedness and if a witch is known he is ostracized from the community. Good people in the community are recognized by their keeping of the tradition (*Omenala*), and by their general dispositions to give alms and gifts to their kinsmen and kinswomen, especially to the poor, and by providing occasions for feasting. <sup>106</sup>

In the original Igbo culture, acquisition and distribution of riches to the community is very important. Poverty is a threat to salvation, and everyone must reserve at least enough property to assure his funeral rites and ceremony. For the Anambra Igbo, to be useful unto salvation, asserts Mmuo, "the riches of the wealthy must be used for the benefit of the members of the community. This is done by creating opportunities for making gifts and for feeding the community", he who has wealth must share it with others; otherwise he is despised and ill-regarded.

<sup>106</sup>*Ibid.*

In the original Igbo culture, from some oral traditions, the researcher gathered that the Igbo does not give aimless gifts, there were no beggars in the traditional Igbo community and borrowing and begging was a shameful thing and degrading signs of laziness. The only way to totally eradicate this phenomenon or ameliorate it to the barest minimum is to return to the status quo. The curriculum must be reviewed, socio-cultural perspective of the Igbo race must be revisited in the schools and the Church can use that as part of her inculcation method of evangelization and mission in the Anambra society. The Anambra Ibos have a unique culture of love and solidarity which is deep-rooted in their religious beliefs believed to have originated from the religious and cultural practices of the sons of Abraham in the Bible. If really the Ibos holds the human person so sacred, believing in the image of Chi-ukwu(*The Mighty God*) in the human persons, then the spirit of "Onyeaghanwanneya" should be the motivating factor in service to one another especially to, according to Pope Francis, those seems to have lost hope in our society, those who are infirm, and those who cannot provide the necessity of life by themselves. By reaffirming and living out the original ethos of "onyeaghanwanneya", which is anchored on the theological virtue of agape love, Anambra State would become an "paradise" where all people live in a real communal life sharing everything in common and altruistic spirit; "but they had everything in common. There was no needy person among them, for those who owned property or houses would sell them, bring the proceeds of the sale, and put them at the feet of the apostles, and they were distributed to each according to needs" (Acts 4: 32 – 35 NAB).

### **C. COLLABORATION WITH BEMSI CHARITY FOUNDATION INTERNATIONAL**

For the Church and State to effectively attend to the situation of streetism in Anambra State, the researcher recommends a progressive collaboration with existing NGOs geared towards the alleviation of poverty, especially ones that have effective apostolate among the street children in the area. The work of pastoral care and socio-economic programs is not the sole work of the Church and the government, they are encouraged to seek adequate collaboration with duly registered charitable organizations through which they may get to these youngsters effectively. Adopting such foundations and sponsoring them financially and with other logistics as their pet projects would enhance the socio-economic and pastoral care for the children living on the streets of the State.

For the above reasons, the researcher hereby deemed it necessary to introduce the existing practical program of BEMSI FOUNDATION to both the State Government and the Church as a tool for achieving this aim. Adopting this BEMSI project, the researcher believes, is the best channel of communication and help to the children on our streets.

### **A SUGGESTED PASTORAL CARE PROGRAMME FOR STREET CHILDREN IN ANAMBRA STATE, IN COLLABORATION WITH BEMSI CHARITY FOUNDATION INTERNATIONAL**

The following is an outline of a proposed pastoral care activities by the BEMSI Charity Foundation in Anambra State of Nigeria for the children living on the Streets. This project has already taken off and the researcher

encourages that the Church and other stake-holders to partner with the foundation in order to achieve a maximum result in the drive to at least reduce the phenomenon to the barest minimum.

#### **ACTION PLAN**

1. Selection and inauguration of mediators around the State for field operations
2. A 2 or 3-day training program for the mediators about the phenomenon and what to do as mediators is organized in collaboration with psychologists, theologians and social work experts as resource persons.
3. A fact-finding drive around the streets of Onitsha as a takeoff city, and among the children on the streets, individual contacts and approaches is made to the youngsters by the mediators to ascertain their situation and desires, appeals are made to them to return to School or learn some sort of craft for better living.
4. During this drive, the mediators are to compile the bio-data of each child approached, taking special note of their family background/contacts, and those interested in returning to schools and training.
5. Personal visitation to their parents is arranged as much as possible for interaction and reconciliation where possible, and permanent links are established with the various families.
6. Those youngsters enlisted are organized into groups and brought together at various times for counselling, seminars etc. and dormitories arranged for them to get them out of the streets, with clothing, food and other necessities provided to make them feel comfortable.
7. The BEMSI leadership at this point writes appeal letters to some individual philanthropists, companies, other humanitarian bodies for financial and material assistance. At the same time appealing for scholarships for individual candidate, to ensure sustainability and education/training of the children.
8. BEMSI is establishing a School at a strategic area to ensure a standard education and moral development for the youngsters. Religious personnel are invited on regular bases to attend to their individual spiritual and moral needs according to the religious affiliation of the candidates.
9. The State and Federal Governments, the Bishops and other religious leaders in the State are informed of this project, inviting them to make courtesy visits to the center and to key into the program for a more effective pastoral attention. A chaplain may be appointed for the center to work with the BEMSI management in matters regarding their spirituality.
10. The mediators are the go between the public and the institution. They are concerned with the daily needs of the youngsters, goes around parishes and organizations to mediate for the daily food and other needs. They include, Lawyers, Medical experts, security personnel, teachers, traders, farmers, artisans, students, entrepreneurs, civil servants, politicians, etc., they are volunteers and open to any

individual who feel the desire to be of service to the poor.

11. Finally, as the project grows further, the church will be encouraged to devote reasonable percentage of her bi-annual incomes for the free education and developmental programs of these children which may involve more of Higher education, Agriculture, small scale businesses, craft training workshops, in collaboration with the government and BEMSI Foundation, to create more jobs for the children and other youths, and evolving loan scheme programs for the graduate-trainees for self-reliance. The School through her Parents and teachers Forum may from time to time organize seminars and workshops for parents and students in matters concerning population control, birth control, family planning and responsible parenthood.

BEMSI had experimented similar plan for the physically challenged (RECDOT Center Ozubulu, Anambra State) in the same region in the past and it worked out perfectly, so the researcher believes it will work again for the children on the streets of Anambra State and beyond if diligently implemented.

## **5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION OF STUDY, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY**

### **A. SUMMARY**

Reviewing the related literatures above, the phenomenon of street children has been generally investigated in four phases – affirmation of the presence of street children in our streets – the causes of the phenomenon – the situation of the street children, church and government interventions if any, - and finally, possible remedies to the phenomenon of street children especially in the case of Anambra State of Nigeria.

Streetism has been defined as the excessive phenomenon of children living on the streets. This refers to children who have made streets and markets or busy places their domicile or quasi-domicile. It includes children and young adults who might not necessarily be homeless or without families, but who live in the street where there is no care, no protection, supervision or direction from parents or responsible adults, and those being used or manipulated for odd and inhumane street hawking and jobs without reasonable remunerations or benefits.

Previous researches confirmed the alarming presence of street children and young adults around almost all the streets in our society. The study affirms that one major problem in finding adequate solution to this dehumanizing problem is the attitude of the people over the issue of poverty line, the debate over who is poor and who is not poor instead of focusing on the main problem. Many who may have the capacity to make reasonable inputs also see themselves as equally poor and need help, for them, what they have is never enough to meet their needs. Therefore, it appears that the rich are getting richer while the poor people especially the vulnerable youths are getting poorer and growing up abandoned in the street.

The research also informed that the situation of the street children in Anambra State is as a result of the recent general societal perception about the street children which can help reverse or perpetuate their situations. The

study revealed that the problem of street children persists largely as a result of parents' perception of children as useful "helping hands" or as "mini adults" who are capable of supplementing family income. However. Findings from the study revealed that the awareness and perception of the people towards the street children were positive in Anambra State, but the attitude of the people, the attention of the government and the pastoral care of the Church towards them is very poor. There is no pastoral presence of the Church felt among the Children and youths living on the Streets of Anambra State.

### **B. CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY**

Based on the findings, the researcher made the following conclusion:

Majority of the respondents were aware of the presence of street children and their conditions in Anambra State of Nigeria. Their perception and attitudes towards the street children were relatively positive except that not much was being done to help them improve their living condition. Majority of the respondents indicated that the major cause of the phenomenon is poor education background of some parents followed by very poor economic situation in the State and the entire Country. Majority equally suggested that the Church in the area can come up with quality pastoral programs among the street children, such as;

- A. Adequate provision of free or very affordable inclusive alternative education such as crafts training- sewing, ICT, shoe making, cosmetology, etc. for self- reliance, to be co-funded by the government and the Church,
- B. Forming of peer cooperative and progressive development unions among the street children were-in they can be mentored to promote their interests,
- C. Training of vanguards to work with the church personnel,
- D. Creation of basic Christian Communities within busy centers, meeting points for counselling/spiritual direction within those areas where street children are rampant.
- E. Also, Bishops are to appoint special priests to have regular celebration of open-air masses in those busy areas. Major part of money collected from offertory and donations are to be channeled towards the welfare and rehabilitation of the children.
- C. Finally, the Church personnel are encouraged to give quality time for consultations and counselling before and after Masses and other activities.

### **D. IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Based on the findings of this study a greater percentage of the public in Anambra State, Nigeria agrees with the menace associated with the phenomenon of Street children in the State, but there is need for the Church to collaborate with the government and NGOs to improve the educational, economic and social welfare of the entire citizens especially those already on the streets. Therefore, the Church as the main pastoral agent, should adopt this study and the researcher's recommendations for implementation, otherwise the trend of streetism in the area will get worse than what it is now in the next five years.

The Church in the area should, as a matter of urgency, establish basic Elementary and High schools around the urban areas accessible to these children with scholarships granted to the more indigent ones, mission schools in

Anambra State at the moment are so exorbitant to the extent that the poor citizens cannot afford them, they are three times more expensive compared to those established by the government. For instance; while all government Basic Primary Schools and Secondary Schools are less than Ten Thousand Naira (NGN10, 000) and Fifteen Thousand Naira (NGN15, 000) respectively per term, majority of the Church-owned Primary and Secondary Schools are plus / minus Fifteen Thousand Naira (NGN15, 000) and One Hundred Thousand Naira (NGN100, 000) per term.

The same is applicable to the medical facilities. All these are to be urgently reviewed by the Church both Catholics and non-Catholic denominations alike due to the economic situation affecting the poor masses.

This study implies too that the church is to do everything possible to incorporate into the educational curriculum a strong emphasis on religious and moral education with a more liberal tone.

#### **E. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings, the researcher made some recommendations to improve the pastoral care and welfare among the Street Children.

Seminars should be organized by Church officials in Anambra State on the theological implication of streetism, its inhumanity and need for parents and families to uphold the dignity of their children.

1. There is need for the Church to provide adequate pastoral care and low-cost educational facilities in the densely populated areas of the State in collaboration with the State government, NGOs and International donor agencies. There should be pastoral centers such as Basic Christian Community Centers, Street Vanguards and emergency Soup Kitchens around the streets to enable the youngsters to come together regularly. The Church, as part of her pastoral mandate, should be more critical and more proactive in her dealings with the government on the socio-economic needs of the people of God whom they pastor. She can create various kinds of jobs to empower the street youths and encourage the Christians to visit the orphanages and destitute homes on very regular basis with donations for sustenance.

2. There is need for the Church to practice pastoral care of reaching out rather than pastoral care of waiting. The Church in Anambra State should commit more of her energies the course of saving the lives of the poor children on the streets rather than irrelevant and flamboyant spending on Sky-scraper Church buildings which they destroy and rebuild at random and their floating of very expensive four-runner cars worth Million dollars. And finally, the researcher recommends that the Church and State should adopt and partner with the BEMSI FOUNDATION in her laudable mission programs for effective pastoral care of the Children in Anambra State.

3. BEMSI Foundation to include a program on responsible parenthood and population control through her school programs and Parents/Teachers Dialogue (PTD) Meetings and seminars. This is to educate parents and children on the negative implication of bearing many children without adequate means of training them and providing necessary means of livelihood.

#### **F. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES**

There should be further study on the practical implementation of the recommendations of this research work, especially on modality for collaborations between the Government, BEMSI Foundation and the Church, without clashes of interests.

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